

THE
CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

MARCH 1937.

PIGEON POST.

BY C. S. JARVIS.

At the end of the War in 1918 a Department was formed in Egypt to administer the deserts, viz. the Frontiers Administration, and the first difficulty it had to contend with was the maintenance of communications. The Western or Libyan Desert is 400 miles wide, and the seat of government of this Province was at Mersa Matruh, some 300 miles from Cairo ; then there were five Oases to be controlled—Siwa, Baharia, Farafra, Kharga, and Dakhla—all buried in the heart of the desert ; down the Red Sea coast there were various more or less important but isolated posts ; and the same state of affairs existed in Sinai. In rare cases a telegraph line existed, but the majority of the stations were at least 150 miles from either Headquarters in Cairo or their own Governorates, and administration was very difficult in consequence. At least, it was very difficult for Headquarters in Cairo, for they, like all Headquarters, felt the urge to control the slightest movements of the men in the outlying stations whom they felt could not possibly carry on or even eat their breakfasts without higher guidance ; but the desert men possibly found the lack of communications more of a convenience than anything else. The only things emanating from Headquarters that were worth while were cheques for travelling allowances, and steps could always be taken to see that letters containing these very necessary adjuncts to life were collected by car, whereas the ordinary correspondence, fatuous, unnecessary, and redundant, could be allowed to trickle through in the normal way on the back of a camel.

Headquarters, however, were resolved to tighten things up and in their search for some means of communication hit on the happy idea of a pigeon service. The scheme was inspired partly by the fact that Egypt was no stranger to the pigeon-post, for history relates that Saladin possessed a most efficient service in the twelfth century and maintained communications between Damascus and Cairo. Moreover, pigeons had served with considerable distinction in the trenches in France, and we were credibly informed that two at least had been awarded the Military Medal, whilst the officer in charge had been promoted to the rank of Colonel and wore red tabs. Pigeons were to be taken seriously, and all unseemly levity on the subject when the proposal was first advanced was sternly discouraged.

The first thing to do, of course, was to form a pigeon department at Headquarters, and long before the birds themselves arrived special pigeon clerks had been appointed and a *liaison* officer put in charge. He had to be called a *liaison* officer owing to the fact that he knew nothing whatsoever about pigeons beyond the fact that they could be spatch-cocked and were exceedingly good to eat. Also in certain Squares in London they would feed from the hand. This was not very much to go on, but better than nothing, and in any case it was intended to engage, immediately a suitable man could be found, a real O.C. Pigeons—a man who could meet them on equal terms.

It then transpired that the amount of real abysmal ignorance on the subject of carrier pigeons that existed in the Provinces was beyond belief and there was not a man who knew anything whatsoever about this intriguing and intelligent bird and his ways. The common belief appeared to be based on a picture one had seen in illustrated Bibles in one's youth showing Noah receiving an olive branch from the

beak of a dove; and otherwise quite intelligent officers appeared to hold the view that the carrier pigeon, having received verbal instructions as to his destination, then picked up the message in his beak, flew off with it, delivered it into the hands of the addressee and came back to say he had done it. Actually, it was not quite so easy as these optimistic officers imagined.

The carrier pigeon, it would appear, has a marked appreciation of its home even if it happens to be an amateur biscuit-box construction in a not too salubrious quarter of a Manchester suburb. 'Be it never so humble there's no place like home,' is apparently the carrier pigeon's motto, and he will return to the home roost even if he has been transferred to a most palatial establishment where there is an extensive view of a ducal demesne, the finest pigeon mixtures are supplied daily, and there is running water in every compartment. This is all very laudable, and some dealers make an extraordinary good living out of selling birds that return again and again to the home loft to be regularly re-sold until the police start making enquiries.

This, however, is only the theory of the business, for all carrier pigeons are not in the same class and they do not all breed true to type. In much the same way as a God-fearing and righteous country parson married to a lady of extreme virtue out of a Cathedral Close or descended from a long line of pure Missionary stock, breeds a son who gets drunk and knocks down Belisha beacons in a car purchased with a dud cheque, so the winner of the London to Manchester pigeon race, mated to the scion of a long line of show birds with unbroken records, may produce a pair of C₃ 'camel-line loafers' who cannot find their own loft if it is only a hundred yards away, and who probably will not go into it if they do discover it.

It is said that the Japanese are so clever and discerning that they can not only detect the sex of a day-old chick but can state if the egg they are eating for breakfast would be in the ordinary course of events a clarion-voiced cock or a clucking hen, and the English dealer who sold our Administration the carrier pigeons must have possessed the same gift of second sight, for practically all the birds that arrived in Egypt were of the corner-boy, shiftless type, and not one had any real love of home.

With the birds arrived the O.C. Pigeons, who came from a good old Manchester pigeon-owning family and was one of those men you see in the corners of railway carriages in the Midlands wearing a black bowler and reading the *Pigeon Fancier*. The obvious thing to have done, of course, would have been to have entrusted the new O.C. with the selection and purchase of the pigeons he was to manage, but it must be remembered that we were a Government Department and of necessity anything that was obviously right was the last possible course to take. The result was that the O.C. took an instant dislike to the pigeons, whom he considered ill-bred and mannerless, and the pigeons retaliated by having no use at all for him.

The first thing he had to do was to breed a stock of young birds for the various Provinces and stations, and the pigeons were so good at this that at the end of six months sufficient young birds were ready to go out into the world and plans of the lofts that were to be built were despatched to the outposts. The O.C. Pigeons, who had probably done very successfully in Manchester with a series of orange-boxes, had very large and aristocratic ideas of the type of housing his official pigeons were to have, but unfortunately Finance belonged to the orange-box school of thought and allowed only sufficient funds to build the most meagre constructions.

The Provinces reacted to the situation in various ways ; the argumentative type of Governor wrote letters about it, the pessimistic completed the foundations and, having exhausted the money, stopped work ; whilst the optimistic finished the buildings and sent in an account for ten times the amount authorised and are still wrangling with Headquarters as to who shall foot the bill.

After the great loft-building controversy, which caused a considerable amount of heated correspondence into which Egyptian clerks entered with zest, never failing to pour petrol on to troubled waters in the certain knowledge that their opposite numbers would supply the necessary match, the buildings were at last constructed to the satisfaction of the O.C., and the birds were despatched to the various out-stations. Considering the amount of publicity the birds had received, their appearance on arrival was definitely disappointing, for they were just ordinary pigeons with either blue or pink shading, so much like those that flutter round the Nelson monument that no ordinary man could tell the difference. We had all, in our ignorance, expected something more closely approximating to the golden eagle or possibly the flamingo.

With the birds arrived the latest edition of the pigeon manual with the inspiring title, *Pigeons, training of, officers for the use of*—. This we found contradicted, on almost every essential point, the various screeds on the subject we had been receiving from the *Liaison* Officer for the last seven months and also upset entirely all our preconceived ideas on the subject.

In the first place, it would appear that the old touching picture of an octogenarian pigeon, with feathers down his legs and the rheumy eyes of senile decay, flying back to the old home loft after seventy years in a strange land was based

upon an entire misapprehension, as, according to the manual, birds could not be trusted to fly back to their headquarters after an absence of more than a month. That is to say, if El Arish, for instance, wished to maintain communication with Nekhl, 100 miles distant, a crate of fresh birds had to be sent there by car at least once a month, and the only satisfaction one obtained from the fatigue was that the birds they were relieving had to fly back and were not allowed to do the journey by motor.

Another very important point was that the birds in the home loft were to be exercised morning and evening by allowing them to fly round the buildings, but during the flight they were forbidden absolutely to settle on the ground or on any other building. This, apparently, was one of the worst things a pigeon could do and ranked with cashing a dud cheque on one's club, holding five aces, or other crimes of similar enormity. A special Arab policeman with a pigeon complex was selected at all stations to take complete charge of the birds and it was his task to see that nothing disgraceful occurred during the morning and evening flights. These men, according to the custom of the country, were immediately christened Abu Hammam (Father of Pigeons), and for some unexplained reason this gave gross offence. Apparently in the Arab world nobody minds having a name like Father of Oil, Father of Frogs, or Son of a Black Man, but to be called the Father of Pigeons, when one actually held the position, was in some mysterious fashion a studied insult. However, the Arabs are very much like ourselves over nicknames, and if one desires to ensure carrying an unpleasant pseudonym to the grave one has only to show annoyance the first time it is used. One of the cleanest-looking men I have ever met was invariably called Filthy, which was due to the fact that his correct name was Luker.

Arab pigeon-keepers, however, were very much better at the work than one would have expected, and the job was eagerly sought after, not so much because of the fact that the post absolved the holder from fatigues and hard patrols, but for the more Oriental reason that there was a rake-off to be earned by the sale of manure to melon cultivators. The amount received came to only a few piastres a year, but, being quite unauthorised and bordering on the illegal as it constituted the sale of Government property, it had that flavour of the good old Turkish days when everybody lived by rake-off and no one received pay.

Shortly after dawn, and again just before sunset, the pigeons were released from their lofts and proceeded to fly around in circles. Abu Hammam stood on the top of the loft with a palm branch in his hand and if the pigeons showed any intention of swooping down on the most attractive lines of the Camel Corps, where all the vulgar pigeons of the village forgathered, he would raise a wild yell and wave his wand. This would have an instantaneous effect and the birds would flutter upwards again in a shamefaced manner (one could not, of course, see the expression of shame on their faces, but one felt instinctively that they were showing remorse for their backsliding) and continue their flight around the loft.

The distribution of birds to the outlying stations naturally led to some of those purely ridiculous situations that can occur only in Egypt. Although the whole Administration had been discussing and writing about carrier pigeons and nothing else for the last six months, it appeared that there was one Egyptian officer who had never even heard of the scheme, or at any rate said so, which amounted to much the same thing, and on the arrival of the birds he gave a big dinner party at which a pigeon pie appeared as the dish of

the evening. It was very difficult to believe in the complete honesty of this particular officer as, when some great Headquarters brain had arrived at the idea of oyster culture at his post on the Red Sea and some hundreds of these bivalves had been despatched to him alive to start an oyster bed, he had on this occasion celebrated their arrival by a dinner party at which oysters figured prominently. He had, however, been most punctilious during the dinner to warn all his guests to save the shells, and these he well and truly planted in the prepared oyster bed the following day. For years afterwards these mute and shining tombstones of misplaced zeal and misplaced trust were carefully inspected by the oyster-brained official from Headquarters, who wondered why they never propagated their species.

This easy solution of a temporary food shortage, putting pigeon *à la casserole* on the table, was one that we never stamped out and was the chief reason why ultimately the pigeon post was scrapped. Another reason was that when anything really important occurred it invariably did so at a time when the loft was empty, owing to the fact that all the birds had been flown off with messages concerning purely mundane matters such as the despatch of a case of whisky, and the new reliefs of pigeons with the customary delay of the Orient had not yet arrived.

With the despatch of the young entry to their various posts, instructions in Arabic and English were issued to the effect that as the birds were young they were on no account to be allowed to breed. This is not as easy as it sounds, as the pigeon has very strong views on the subject. The Egyptian officer, or Mamour, who was in command at the Oasis in Dakhla, and who received a dozen birds, after three months sent in a return—for of course we had to render returns on pigeons—showing that he had eighteen birds instead of

twelve. Headquarters demanded an explanation, saying, 'Twelve birds only were sent to Dakhla. Please explain the presence of the additional six,' which brought from the British officer at Kharga, who was responsible for Dakhla, a reply to the effect that they had arrived in the ordinary process of incubation from eggs. A stiff letter was then despatched from Cairo pointing out that orders were being disobeyed as the birds were not to breed in any circumstances; but it arrived too late to stop the fecund-minded Dakhla official, who retaliated by replying that he had been instrumental in bringing another six birds into the world. During the heated and lengthy correspondence that ensued as the result of this second flouting of orders, and the demand that the responsible official should be brought to book, the Dakhla Mamour continued to report cheerfully the arrival of young birds till the day when the edict went forth that the pigeons having reached the age of maturity were to be allowed to breed officially, whereupon an indignant letter was received from Dakhla stating that as no nesting-boxes had been sent it was obviously impossible for him to carry out orders. After this not a bird was produced and sterility reigned supreme in this fruitful Oasis.

The training of pigeons to fly distances is not so easy as is commonly imagined, and if the instructions had been carried out properly the complete staff of the Provinces would have been engaged on pigeon training and nothing else. Birds had to be gradually initiated, being flown one mile from their loft the first day, two miles the second, and so on till they could be relied upon to return to their home from any distance; but this happy state of affairs was very seldom achieved. The official at Edfu sent a dozen pigeons by rail to Kharga and asked the Governor there to release them. This he did and was immediately bombarded

by telegrams asking the pertinent question when he proposed to release them. On replying that he had done so, a marked coolness sprang up between these two worthy bearers of the White Man's Burden, and the Edfu man to this day is firmly of opinion that the Kharga official is the type of individual so lost to all sense of decency that he is not above making up his deficiencies from a colleague's stock.

It was not merely a question of the birds failing to return altogether, but also there was definite proof that they lingered by the wayside and philandered not only with ordinary domestic pigeons but also with the wild blue rocks of the desert. The El Arish pigeons were notorious in this respect and the loft was filled with that particularly repellent type of backsliding husband who brings other women into his wife's house. There were several clear and very regrettable cases of a cock pigeon billing and cooing on the alighting board of the loft with a stray blue rock from the desert, what time his lawful wife was sitting inside on a clutch of eggs of which he was the father. One cannot sink much lower than this, and when an indignant letter of complaint of this conduct was sent to Headquarters, hinting that they were more or less responsible for this fall from grace, an official reply was received to the effect that a mistake must have been made as there was not the slightest resemblance between a carrier pigeon and a blue rock and such behaviour, therefore, was impossible. To prove that a blue rock is actually very much like a carrier pigeon, El Arish shot a blue rock and sent it to Headquarters with an official ring on its leg asking for a post-mortem to be made to discover the cause of death; and a reply was received in due course to the effect that the disease, a Latin one of five syllables, was caused by wrong feeding and lack of exercise, and that greater care should be taken in future.

One way and another, the pigeons provided a considerable amount of quiet fun, which was accentuated by the fact that, while the 'desert' refused absolutely to take them seriously in any circumstances, 'Cairo' regarded the pigeon complex almost as a religious creed and looked upon any flippancy on the subject as a form of blasphemy.

The grand *finale* occurred when the Director-General came round on a tour of inspection to the Peninsula of Sinai. The correct technique on these occasions is to decide exactly what the inspecting authority should and what he should not see. A tremendous lot depends upon the ability of the official in question to understand what he is looking at when it is pointed out to him, and a fairly safe rule is to avoid anything which by reason of its intricacy is beyond that understanding. In some cases this means one is unable to show anything at all, for in the East many individuals rise to eminence on an intellectuality and grasp of affairs that would be insufficient to guide the ordinary rabbit safely through life. The matter was more or less simple in this particular case, as the official in question suffered from such advanced astigmatism that he was quite unable to see anything, and therefore the difficulty of deciding whether he could understand or not did not arise.

As the carrier pigeons were still regarded as an outstanding success, it was ordained that they should be displayed and a demonstration was to be staged to prove the rapidity with which messages could be despatched across the wide open spaces. It was decreed that this should take place at Nekhl because the route between that spot and Al Arish was devoid of blue rock Delilahs and there was, therefore, less likelihood of birds going astray. By this time the standard of morality in the lofts was deplorable, for the hen birds, mindful of the saw about the sauce for the goose and the gander, were now

bringing in male blue rocks to their homes, so that as far as reliability was concerned there was nothing much to pick between the two sexes. Previously a hen with young could be trusted to fly back to the home loft with a certain degree of punctuality, but now there was no guarantee whatsoever, and mother love appeared to have vanished with the general break up of home life.

It is laid down in all pigeon manuals that birds should not be fed or watered before being flown, but unfortunately the car driver responsible for the transport of the birds discovered a huge bag of beans with the travelling crates. With that excess of misplaced zeal that is an outstanding feature of Eastern official life, he provided the birds with a wonderful 'blow-out' on the beans and then, emulating the Boy Scout and the day's good deed, gave them as much water as they would drink. This had the immediate effect of swelling the beans till the birds' crops were at bursting-point.

At 8 a.m., when the demonstration was staged to take place, the Director-General was escorted into the square in front of the Rest House to see the birds start out on their flight across the desert. Messages were written, rolled into the little aluminium receptacles, and handed out to be attached to the legs of certain pigeons that had been selected as least likely to 'let the side down.' The crates were then brought out and there was some slight delay at this point as the Arab policeman in charge of the pigeons, on discovering the condition of his charges, had to be forcibly restrained from making a savage assault on the well-meaning car-driver. The doors of the baskets were then opened, but, instead of a wild rush of wings, nothing happened and the insertion of a stick only caused one pigeon to waddle out heavily and give expression to an enormous yawn.

The Arab policeman then rushed at the crates, tipped them up one after another, and decanted the occupants, who flapped lazily to the roof of the Rest House, where they alighted heavily and sat like a row of gorged vultures. This is the worst thing a carrier pigeon can do, for, according to the book of words, the birds should ascend immediately to a great height from which they can pick up a landmark and, having done so, set out at once on their journey.

Luckily the Director-General, with his most inefficient eyes, had lost sight of the birds the moment they left their crates and, though the police and car-drivers were throwing stones and pieces of wood to dislodge the pigeons from the roof, he remained gazing rapturously upwards at the skies overhead where he had been informed the birds would ascend immediately.

'Aha, I see them,' he said, peering through his thick lenses, and looking upwards the horrified officials realised that Sinai had come to their rescue, for a hundred feet or so above a flight of golden eagles, possibly attracted by the pigeons, were circling in long sweeping spirals. 'And that is the way they look for their home?'

'Yes,' said a mendacious official quickly, 'that's the way they do it, but as they take some time over it, perhaps we had better go in to breakfast.'

By the time the meal had been disposed of, and the party had come out to mount the cars that were to take them on the next stage of the journey, the pigeons had disappeared from the ridge of the Rest House roof. A hail of stones and sticks had made this comfortable perch untenable, and as there was no other seating accommodation available for several miles the birds had resentfully and mutinously set forth on their flight home. Unfortunately, however, after the cars had proceeded on their way for a mile or so a

mechanical breakdown necessitated a short halt, and whilst repairs were being effected one of the pigeons, who had sighted the car in which he had travelled the long weary road from El Arish, suddenly swooped down out of the blue and settled on the hood. He had not the slightest intention of returning to the loft by wing-power so long as there was any chance of making the journey in comfort in his travelling crate.

Scandalised drivers and officials shooed him off, but he was not to be denied and fluttered from one car to another, till finally one of his short dodging flights brought him so close to the Director-General that he nearly knocked his glasses off.

'Is that one of the pigeons we have just set free?' he asked.

'Yes, sir,' said the official who had previously achieved fame by his avoidance of the truth. 'One of them has just returned with a note to say that our message has been received at El Arish.'

'Marvellous—truly marvellous,' exclaimed the Director-General. 'I must write this up in a report.'

Luckily for Egypt, however, one of those unforeseen Cabinet changes that are so frequent in the country took place immediately after this lamentable occurrence, the result of which was that the report, which recommended the total abolition of the telegraph system throughout the Nile Valley, and the installation of pigeon post, was lost in the welter of warring political parties, and in the chaos of the upheaval the opportunity was seized, quietly but effectually, to suppress the pigeon service altogether.

has great hidden wealth stored up in manuscript
libraries, of which just so little has been written or
spoken to it that most of it remains still
unseen and unused.

CINDERELLAS OF THE BOOK-SHELF.

I.—WANDER-YEARS AT HOME.

BY W. J. BLYTON.

MAPS old and new, guide-books, ancient and modern atlases, 'itineraries' and gazetteers—can these things, usually consigned to the top or bottom shelves, become a magic carpet? They can. Gates into wonderland they can be, in many a mood, through which with Cowper we can 'make the great circuit and be still at home.' Even the dictionary may be what the young Scotsman with a sacred thirst for learning called 'fine confused feeding'—but the dictionaries, whether strange or useful, antique or ultra-modern, will be noted in a sequel later, apropos the centenary in 1937 of the birth of Sir James G. H. Murray, editor of *The New English Dictionary*.

'The tours that one makes in his own room with a Murray and a Bradshaw,' wrote Sir Edward Cook, 'are sometimes the best of all. In them the railway carriages are never crowded, the trains are never late, the inns are always glad to see you, the beds are always clean, and it never rains except at night.'

And, I would add, the soul is never chilled by some fellow-traveller's malapropisms. Nor does one get hungry and faint while dallying in 'lost' old towns and sites like Silchester, Timgad, Wroxeter and Sarum, or vanished ports like Chaucer's Topsham, Richborough, Ebbsfleet, Pevensey and Rye. Sir Edward Cook mentions the rivalry that existed between Murray and Baedaker; the former, who was the pioneer, was

'incomparably the better. Baedeker cribbed freely and sometimes comically. The original Murray's *Switzerland* was by John Murray the Third, who had a taste for geology. This caused him to notice in one of the southern Swiss valleys that "the slate rocks here are full of red garnets." Baedeker misconstrued, and informed us that the rocks are "overgrown with red pomegranates." Murray wrote for educated and leisured travellers, Baedeker for hurried tourists.'

Sir Edward Cook held that the special features of the earlier editions (prepared as long as a century ago) remain the best, 'and one of them at least—Richard Ford's *Handbook to Spain*—is almost a classic. Fortunately for collectors of such things, there is no run after early Murray's (except in the case of the original edition of Ford).'

Thereupon he recounts a discovery.

'Just not too late for use in a piece of work I was engaged upon at the time, I picked up for a few pence a Third Edition of Murray's *Handbook for Travellers in Northern Italy* (1847). On looking into it I found a series of notes contributed by Ruskin, which had been crowded out of the modern editions and had escaped the notice of previous bibliographers of my author.'

Thus the good guide-book may claim to be a branch of literature : apart from Ruskin, Wordsworth did not think it beneath him to write a Guide to the Lakes ; Harriet Martineau also, and Mr. Arthur Salmon, a West Country poet, have done several excellent guides. What is Mr. Norman Douglas's *Old Calabria*, what is Butler's *Alps and Sanctuaries*, but a guide-book touched with genius ? In my own home, we have nearly four shelves filled with travel handbooks—an epitome of the travels of the family for the past forty years, reinforced now by the sixpenny photographic annuals issued by the railway companies. And, to vary Wordsworth on the sonnet—

'In truth, the prison unto which we doom
Ourselves, no prison is; and hence to me,
In sundry moods, 'tis pastime to be bound
Within the guide-book's scanty plot of ground:
Pleased if some souls (for such there needs must be)
Who have felt the weight of too much liberty
Should find short solace there, as I have found.'

A confession : in certain moods of anxiety, of something like faint claustrophobia when in town, I have had release and the illusion of being in happier scenes from these books than, at such moments, I have been able to distil from pure literature. For some mental ills there is no cure like 'a draught of earlier, happier sights': how free and contented one felt on *that* shore, how exquisite the calm week in *this* valley—and so on. It reminds the fainting heart that good things have been, and will come again.

W. H. Hudson stoutly denied that there *could* be a bad guide-book, and those that are good in the highest sense are beyond praise. 'A reverential sentiment, which is almost religious in character,' he wrote, 'connects itself in our minds with the very name of Murray.' Never, he thought, did these volumes become wholly out of date. When a new one comes out and, say, five thousand copies are sold, it does not throw as many, or indeed any, copies of the old book out of circulation. Editions of 1840 and earlier are still prized, not merely as keepsakes, but for study or reference. He proved it at the second-hand book-stalls, where he was offered a county guide for four or five shillings, 'the price of a Crabbe in eight volumes, or of Gibbon's *Decline and Fall* in six volumes, bound in calf.' The booksellers assert that there is always a sale—the supply does not keep pace with the demand. 'There is nothing to quarrel with in all

this,' he says. 'As a people we run about a great deal; and having curious minds we naturally wish to know all there is to be known, or all that is interesting to know, about the places we visit.'

Hudson's own plan, recommended only to those who go out for pleasure rather than useful knowledge, was not to look at the guide-book until the place it treats of has been explored and left behind. I am bound to say that the method works. One inevitably misses some objects, and still more some interesting points relating to them. But vivid new pleasure in a few things found for oneself is preferable to that fainter, diffused feeling experienced when we go with a mind stocked with facts. And then, afterward, by the fireside, the book will *expound* the experience to the returned wanderer. Now you are reading about places you know emotionally, and every particular 'tells.'

However, Lionel Johnson differs: in *The Art of Thomas Hardy*, that scholarly discussion, he considers that knowing should precede seeing in most cases, especially in traversing foreign soil. But even at home, how shall we distil, on the spot, the meaning of some places and place-names without preparation? Any detailed map, old or new, of any shire is a museum of these survivals. Take the Latin names, with all sorts of ecclesiastical and other flavours: Toller Porcorum, Toller Fratrum, Ryme Intrinsica, Cerne Abbas, (and many another Abbas), Whitechurch Canonicorum, Minterne Magna (and numerous Magnas and Parvas), and—who would not live for a dreamy ten minutes in Fifehead Magdalen? A crowd of western villages have the prefixes Tarrant, and Gussage, and a few have Matravers as their second name. The eye is detained by Womanswold in Kent, Aston Cantlow, Wootten Wawen, Baptist End, and Rood End near Birmingham; Midsomer Norton in the

Mendips ; Beanacre and Shrivenham in Wilts ; others, comfortably rural or richly romantic, as Purse Caundle, Marsh Caundle, Caundle Bishop, Corfe Mullen, Stower Provost, Melbury Bubb, Sutton Pointz, Owre Moigne, Hazelbury Bryne, and the Chickereles. Matthew Arnold liked to compare the smack of the soil in the Saxon Shalford, Thaxterd and Weathersfield with the faery beauty of the Celtic places, Velindra, Marazion, Tyntagel and Caernarvon.

Caxton's *Informacion for Pylgrymes unto the Holy Londe* gives detailed routes, fares, sights, accommodation—personally conducted tours five hundred years before Cook's or Lunn's ! It is good to trace the old Pilgrims' Ways—not merely Chaucer's from Southwark along the Medway side to Canterbury's 'holie blisful martir,' but the northerners' with their halts as at Coventry where the gild merchant kept 'a lodging house with thirteen beds to lodge poor folks,' with a governor 'and a woman to wash their feet and whatever else is needed'; and the foreigners' Way, so pleasant to follow on a summer's day, from Southampton through Hampshire (above Alton, where I have sat by the hour with only the sibilation of the wind, and larksong) and Surrey (a lovely stretch, this, from Caterham up over the long, long hill into Merstham, with the following view of White Hill and that grand Surrey range) or past 'St. Martha's' (St. Martyr's) on the ridge over Guildford. The Ways follow the flanks of the downs, avoiding villages ; marked sometimes by old yews, here a minor road, there a grassy track, and latterly a few crossed by an arterial road along which land-liners hurtle day and night. These quiet routes are even more fascinating to trace than the Watling Street, Icknield Way, and Stane Street of the Romans ; for they are nearer to us in sentiment.

The old-time Tour or Itinerary is a great 'escape.' Take

old William Lithgow, the Scot, who claimed that he had walked over 36,000 miles (refusing lifts) and in 1640 published *The Total Discourse of the Rare Adventures and Painful Peregrinations of Long Nineteen Years' Travels from Scotland to the most Famous Kingdoms in Europe, Asia, and Africa. Perfited by Three Dear-Bought Voyages in surveying Forty-eight Kingdoms, Ancient and Modern; Twenty-one Republics, Ten Absolute Principalities, with Two hundred Islands.* A man, you perceive, of good wind. What finally broke him was imprisonment at Malaga, in Spain, as an English spy, and subsequent tortures. He was rescued and sent at King James's expense to Bath to recruit his shattered frame. However, he died in 1640 while attempting to secure redress before the Upper House. Nothing in the Hakluyt Society's publications has more the air of a realised day-dream than this peripatetic's narrative—prefiguring the restless Walking Stewart of whom De Quincey wrote.

George Sandys, a wandering son of an Archbishop of York, was continually on the move at home and abroad, and his work ran quickly into seven editions. And in what idiomatic English James Howell wrote his *Familiar Letters*. He first travelled for patent glass, then as diplomat, as secretary to Lord Scrope, president of the North and to our Ambassador in Denmark ; from Fleet Prison—where the Roundheads put him, because he had been Charles I's Clerk of the Council—he went on writing ; as he did on his liberation, to be first historiographer-royal, till the tale of his works mounted to forty. He poured out information generously, as a ton of coal is shot into our cellars—on the drinks, diets, oaths, dialects, games and dresses of various parts of this country and others.

The public appetite for travellers' tales was not to be satiated—even when Camden entered with his *Britannia* and

Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun with his discoveries of North Britain. Charles Cotton, besides translating Montaigne and continuing *The Compleat Angler*, wrote a journey through England to Ireland, anticipating Anstey's *New Bath Guide* and Thackeray's *Irish Sketch Book*. John Evelyn found out all that was to be known about our woods and forests, and spurred landowners to vigorous reboisement. Defoe (who helped to negotiate the Union with Scotland) was a fascinating guide in *A Tour Through Great Britain* when wool (a subject he understood, for he traded in it) was our staple industry. John Aubrey's chronicles are a mine of local gossip and topographical charm. Arthur Young later went about incessantly rooting out farming secrets, as Cobbett did in his *Rural Rides*. Gray was first to appreciate fully the Lake District, and surpassed Dr. Johnson's *Tour to the Hebrides* in his appraisal of north British landscape. Smollett, of course, was a very locomotive person, and Fielding ended his life travelling. The picaresque novel met this thirst. Half the secret of Byron's early vogue, with *Childe Harold*, was that it was versified description of places and events. His friend Galt, as a change from Ayrshire descriptions, wrote travels and *The Wandering Jew*.

To-day, holiday-makers, cars and bungalows may have obliterated some of the flora and fauna described by the Rev. Henry Wood generations ago in *A Week at the Lizard*—but out-of-dateness is, in some moods, a positive recommendation to a book for an idle hour. Consider, in that light, a last-century account of Hampshire, with maps. From this I see that the little branch railways had their distinctive names; that was the day before amalgamations. Cycles were a novelty under the name of 'machines,' and the attitude of the countryside toward them was uncertain. 'School boards,' the writer feared, 'may work a change in

the vernacular,' and he suspected the Government of the time of designs to build camps in the Forest where, moreover, there was then 'a total want of public conveyances. Driving, of course, costs money, at the usual posting rates.' The Verderers in their courts of Swain-mote representing the rights of commoners are described with a leisurely charm, and we are at once in contact with Norman Forestry laws, the chase, and curfew. The Twelve Apostles on Burley Hill are a dozen glorious oaks no more. In our anonymous guide's day, horse fairs flourished under the shadow of Romsey Abbey ; and 'we need not say much as to the horse-coach excursions, because their conductors are apt to be only too loquacious in giving information and what they take to be amusement.' Were he with us to-day, he would not be so austere : our drivers, with hands on the wheel and eyes fixed on the road, do not consider that to amuse us is among their scheduled duties. At Brockenhurst, 'a pair of *brick* houses of gentility hint at a rising resort' : what would he see and say to-day ? Tastes have changed in landscape. He agrees with old parson Gilpin that these 'tracts of healthy country are larger than picturesque beauty requires.' Moors and downs cannot be too spacious for us to-day. It appears too that 'Mr. R. L. Stevenson' had just decided to take up residence on the West Cliff, near the 'ragged moor.' To speed at forty-five miles an hour on metalled roads was not then a kind of consummation.

Here next is a book of the 'fifties by a Northamptonshire man on some beloved villages and recesses. It is not at all necessary to know a shire, except superficially, to be able to savour the beauty which affection and curiosity (*miritus genius, it may be*) distil from, say, Northampton, 'The Drapery, Bridge Street, the Mayorhold and Horse Market,' described with almost Dickensian enthusiasm, and not

fearing to give the names of stallholders and shopkeeping burgesses.

'Midland though we be, and thoroughly English, there is yet something about the markets here which recalls Continental characteristics, Rouen or Treves or Amsterdam. We jot down our impression of this picture because, for aught we know to the contrary, this may be the last year of its existence.'

It was, almost. And therein lies the value of these mementoes. They give us something 'which, having been, must ever be.' Fish at these markets was a special importation, chiefly in the hands of the guard or the coachman of the stage coaches, who brought down from London sole or salmon or oysters by individual order. The mails were but magnified 'tranters' or carriers. England was in a sense a collection of villages, and the personal touch was everywhere.

Edna Lyall contributed to another guide-book I possess, in which she deliberately depicts an old country town as she knew it long ago when she played in Archbishop Sumner's garden. Barham of *Ingoldsby Legends* fame was an authority on his home city, Canterbury. In fact, great minds love little subjects—local data—they can read so much into them. Arnold Bennett once declared that a little enquiry into the history of your own environment is one of the most absorbing and profitable diversions that can be conceived :

'It will banish ennui and quite cure the common distressing illusion that one's town, district or suburb is humanly less interesting than, say, Canterbury, Warsaw or Constantinople. . . . Curious that people should assume that where they live is a fixed, changeless fact, instead of being as it is a living, constantly evolving organism. The very stuff of history is in the stones and bricks, roads and lanes around you. The mere Ford car is a proof, first, that Colum-

bus discovered America ; and second, that America discovered you.'

Maps, new or old, are in some moods equally engrossing. Ability to pore over them is as great a felicity as to be able to read a music score, or another language. I would instance 'the Globe after the Map made by Martin Behaim of Nuremberg, 1492.' Navigators, I suppose, made something of it ; but it was essentially for home-staying dreamers. Boreas and Euryclidon with puffed cheeks fill the sails of the vessels on the main, dotted with isles that have Latin names ; mermen and mermaids disport on those perilous seas ; creatures like the Loch Ness monster writhe in the corners, at the Polus Antarcticus and Polus Arcticus. Here we may wander like Ulysses over vague and wavering frontiers, evading customs and *octroi* demands, free as the albatross which the ancient artist suggests. Such maps it was that Chaucer knew, in a time when 'palmeres seeken straunge strondes.' It is good—fun I nearly said, and why not ?—to compare the variations in frontiers down the centuries, the rise and fall of cities, the thickening of towns, the ups and downs of rivers, ports and high roads. Better still, to brood, with that apparent aimlessness of attention which yet takes so much in, upon a large and very detailed map of England, or of your shire ; to 'make the great circuit and be still at home,' and put a girdle round the earth.

For worried people who dread the hour of bedtime, and the prospect of insomnia, I know no such 'dormative to take to bedward' as a kindly glass of something by the fire-side, a cigarette, and a good scale clear map through which one may loiter or skip, speculating on this little pleiad of villages, that other range of hills, the mysterious zigzags of the roads, the looming here of a cathedral city, the meander-

ings of a river. And the comparison of place-names in different shires—thorpes and bys in Lincolnshire, wic in Norfolk and Suffolk, hurst in Sussex, and so on. Therein it is possible to trace over again, without fatigue, a long-gone journey, or play with the plan of a future one. An ordnance survey map of the ten miles round my own hamlet is a favourite outing of mine ‘when ways are foul and fields are mire.’ Almost as much as the guide-book of some remembered spot, but not quite, it flood-lights the tired or desponding mind with former sunshine, wholesome weather of the spirit, scenes of ‘long and merry ago.’ Nothing that Stevenson ever wrote gave him half the pleasure of inventing the map for *Treasure Island*; by it, he wrote the mere story!

Bring no critical mind to the perusal of the guide-book illustrations, but rather stare at them and *into* them with that half-conscious reverie of childhood which sees far, and identifies itself with the spirit of a scene however roughly etched, weaving a story round them. A great boon, these illustrations, to those who feel imprisoned in the every-dayness and staleness of routine; who are too busy or too poor to get away; who are hag-ridden for the time by some all-too-human trouble or fear which is eating the heart out of them. Turn the leaves slowly till you come to the picture which is for *you*; it is probably there, waiting, a charm against the blue devils, an assurance of the abiding sanity of the great out-of-doors . . .

‘Be patient, for the world is broad and wide . . .

All places that the eye of heaven visits

Are to the wise man ports and happy havens.’

I am tired of hearing that there’s a wind on the heath, brother; night and day, stars, etc., all sweet things. Still, they do exist, guarantees of the central sanity and health

of the world, however racked your human affairs may be at the moment ; and instead of letting the rats go round and round in your head and gnaw your nerve, remember the bright seas break and crash still round those weedy rocks where you sat in the summer of '32, heather and broom burn on the moors you walked in '34, and still the comfortable farm sounds ascend from the village of Little Ridding where you pottered, free and happy, three years ago. Tell yourself a story, as R. L. S. did :

'The inn at Burford Bridge in Surrey, with its arbours and green garden, and silent eddying river—though it is known already as the place where Keats wrote some of his *Endymion* and Nelson parted from his Emma—still seems to wait the coming of the appropriate legend. Within these ivied walls, behind those old green shutters, some further business smoulders, waiting for its hour. I have lived there in a perpetual flutter, on the heels, as it seemed, of some adventure that should justify the place ; but though the feeling had me to bed at night and called me again at morning, nothing befell. The man or the hour had not yet come ; but some frosty night, I think, a horseman shall rattle with his whip upon the green shutters.'

The universal is the true antiseptic ; living with one's private cares is toxic. Guide-books, maps, albums of picture-post card souvenirs are the cure when we are not quite in the mood for greater prose, poetry and music. Even the unwilling egoist or invalid has a mind and imagination far bigger than his malady, and it can take in other things besides personal fears or anxieties—a thousand fragments of rural England, vignettes of seashore, the lifted sky-lines of the Downs, the good bustle in market towns, the gleam of rivers, the song of night-winds. That talented truant Stevenson found that

' one place suggests idleness ; another, early rising and long rambles in the dew. The effect of night, of any flowing water, of lighted cities, of the peep of day, of ships, of the open ocean, calls up in the mind an army of anonymous desires and pleasures. The happiest hours of life are those which fleet by in this attendance on the genius of the place and moment. It is thus that tracts of young fir, and low rocks that reach into deep soundings, particularly torture and delight me. Something must have happened in such places, and perhaps ages back, to members of my race.'

After many buffettings Hazlitt found that 'this dreaming existence is the best' ; and again, 'Oh, it is great to shake off the trammels of the world—to lose our importunate personal identity in the elements of nature and become the creature of the moment, clear of all ties.'

Are the old guide-book, photograph and painting to become the last link with country beauty ? F. W. H. Myers thought so. 'The natural sanctuaries of England,' he wrote, "the last region which Astraea touches with flying feet," will be sacrificed—it is scarcely possible to doubt it—to the greed of gain. Yet the ever-springing affections of men may inspire some new landscape with a consecrating history and a silent soul.'

And there is still another private wicket into the wide, wide world, which we will open and adventure beyond, in a further talk.

(*To be continued.*)

and his quick-witted mother, according to legend, had only to speak softly to the Eskimos to have them be induced to return the valuable sealskin which she had given to the people in exchange for the seal-skin. He could find no record of any such legend in any of the histories of the place, nor did the people seem to know anything about it.

PHISTO'S MESSAGE.

BY J. M. SCOTT.

SLOWLY, methodically, Phisto Evelyn made himself comfortable in the front cockpit of his small machine. He adjusted his goggles, pulled on his gloves and tested the controls. Then, suddenly impatient, he waved away the Eskimos who were holding the wing-tips and, without a glance at the men who had come to see him and his companion off, pushed forward the throttle lever.

'Good luck and . . .' Fenton shouted. He had meant to say something encouraging to the smiling youth in the back seat, but a sudden blizzard of cold air and snow-grains thrust back by the propeller drove him gasping from the 'plane's side. For a moment the little machine stood shuddering: then, overcoming the frosty grip upon her skis, she began to glide forward, faster and faster, over the smooth snow which covered the ice of the fjord.

Simon Wentworth tensed himself for the thrilling experience of rising above the earth for the first time in his life. But so level was the run-way, so still the air, and so gradually did his pilot pull back the joy-stick that he did not realise he was flying until the machine was twenty feet above the snow. Before she reached the head of the fjord, where a forest of stones and boulders marked the termination of a dead glacier that protruded like a tongue from the great white face of the Ice Cap, Phisto banked the 'plane in a climbing turn and swept back down the fjord, gaining altitude.

Simon, glancing at the altimeter, noticed that they were

now 500 feet up, and, with a faint but pleasurable feeling of importance, jotted down his first temperature observation. Not many people, he thought, were given a responsible job to do on their first flight. He wasn't just a passenger.

He wanted to make a remark into the speaking-tube, but the uncompromising back of Phisto's leather-covered head silenced him. The man did not seem glad of his company. Simon, a romantic and companionable youth, was sorry. He admired this dour and fearless pilot even though he had been so often snubbed by him during the expedition. Surely this adventure which they were to share would break through the fellow's armour of aloofness. But the back of Phisto's head, Simon reluctantly decided, didn't look as if he considered this flight as an adventure : he seemed more like a man who has been forced to take the wrong girl home after a dance.

Therefore Simon decided not to say anything just yet, and looked down over the side of the machine instead. He was relieved to find that he was not at all scared by the altitude. The Eskimos, he saw, were still frozen to the ice, gazing upwards ; but the Englishmen were strolling back towards the hut. Fenton walked alone, slowly, as if in thought. He was, in fact, thinking about the two men now almost 1,000 feet above him. He was not worried about the success of their flight, which was merely a routine matter of collecting meteorological data between the coast and the middle line of the great Ice Cap ; but being a student of human nature—as every exploratory leader must be—he was pondering the different temperaments, the very different outlooks on life, of the two men above him. Simon Wentworth was a likeable fellow—strong, friendly, eager, ready to try anything—almost too ready. This was his first expedition, but during the early winter he had

promised well. Certainly he had not had a thorough testing, but Fenton believed that he would be a good man for the long sledge journeys over the Ice Cap, which he had planned for the next spring and summer. That was why he had decided to send him as observer on this flight. The work of scribbling down thermometer and barometer readings was easy enough, and the experience would teach the boy something about the form, the varying surface and the immensity of the Ice Cap, which so far he had only glimpsed from the safety of the coastal base. The fear that comes of finding oneself a hundred miles from the nearest particle of life, or the boredom of seeing nothing but endless white undulations, might help to make him consider this business of exploration as exacting a job as any other.

Why, Fenton wondered, did Phisto dislike the boy? He was far too good a traveller actually to quarrel with a fellow member of the expedition; but in his blunt way he had made it very clear that he didn't want an observer on this flight. All he had said in reply to Fenton's argument was: 'Keen? Yes, he's too damn' keen. And he's read too many books. He'll be dropping Union Jacks all over the Ice Caps, and one of them is sure to get caught up in the controls.'

Fenton, knowing his pilot, had laughed and told him not to be an ass. With that the matter was settled, for Phisto always carried out his leader's wishes even though he might first express his disapproval of them. But he never spoke twice on any subject. Usually he did not speak at all.

He had been seven years at this business of exploratory flying: flying at 10,000 feet above jagged mountain ranges to make photographic surveys of them, flying across the barren Ice Cap to discover how its weather varied from the sea's, flying up and down the coasts of Greenland and Baffin

Land in search of landing-grounds on what may some day be the aerial highway between Europe and America. He knew all there was to know about the business. He appeared not in the least excited by it, not in the least afraid. By some means, logical or semi-miraculous, he could be trusted to get himself and his companion out of any adventure. That was why Fenton liked to put the new-comers in his charge.

Mentally and physically he was striking—tall, angular, with stooping shoulders, thin black hair and thick black eyebrows, deep-set and disconcerting eyes. At the Base 'Mephistopheles' lived his own life entirely, ceaselessly smoking a pipe which he filled by shaving plug tobacco into it with a large, bone-handled knife, so that the thumb of his left hand—a long, bony hand with black hairs on the backs of its fingers—was serrated with scores of tiny cuts like the crevasses on a glacier. On a flight he nursed his engine and his companion alike with the minute yet callous attention of a true mechanic.

So much was known to every member of the expedition ; but even Fenton, who had shared with his pilot those supposedly intimate moments engendered by loneliness and danger, could do little more than guess at the man's earlier history. It was not that there was any lack of stories about him ; but since the subject of these tales would neither confirm nor confute them, they only served to add glamour to his reputation. Most were manifestly exaggerated, but some, Fenton decided, might well be true. For instance, Phisto's great knowledge of mechanics and of scientific matters in general proved that he had worked hard in his early years. It was a fact, too, that he had once held an important post in a big engineering firm. But then, apparently, something had happened—was it the death of

his wife :—which had destroyed his ambition. About the years that followed there were many stories of suicidally daring exploits. Fenton did not believe them. He knew that Phisto lived a life more dangerous than that of other men, but he knew also that he used risks as coldly, and for as precise a purpose, as he used a spanner. Once, though only once, Phisto had come near to confirming this in words : ‘ You needn’t be afraid I’ll give in,’ he had said. ‘ I can wait. And I’d never risk a life besides my own. Only, when I’m alone, I like to get near enough to Death to spit in his face—and then walk away unharmed.’

His creed appeared to be that some day he would be free ; but till then he must achieve useful ends with the peculiar gifts of one who has nothing more to lose. So he had fallen in with Fenton, who was also something of an idealist ; and the two men had worked harmoniously together, though with few words. Year after year they returned to the cold, exacting North.

There is little wonder then that Fenton, though he was thinking of the two men above him, felt no anxiety for their safety. The month was February and the days were very short, but the flight should not take more than a couple of hours each way. And even in the unlikely event of a forced landing the men should still be safe, for their machine carried snowshoes, sleeping-bags, a small tent, a paraffin stove and a fortnight’s food for each man, contained in separate canvas bags lashed to the fuselage.

Phisto Evelyn, who had himself packed these stores and tested the engine, was as little anxious as his leader. Sitting at ease in his cockpit, he continued to climb in slow spirals till the machine was 3,000 feet above the Base.

‘ Heavens, what a view ! ’ came Simon’s voice through the earphones.

Phisto said nothing, for there was nothing to say ; yet he, too, felt a glow of wonder as he looked about him. For a winter's day the visibility was marvellously good. The coast was clear for a hundred miles to north and south. It was a deeply indented coast, and its long, thin fjords were frozen and snow-covered, imprisoning the icebergs which had drifted into them during the last summer. But farther out these smooth sheets of ice were broken into floes which from this altitude looked like paper boats on a pond. Beyond these again was the grey-blue of the open sea, stretching to the eastward until it met the sky. The coastal mountains were tall and massive, formed of black basalt. They leaned their shoulders against the convex mass of the Ice Cap, holding it back from the sea except where a glacier escaped between them to reach the head of a fjord. The Ice Cap itself, Phisto thought, looked like a bank of stratus clouds seen from above ; only its surface was not horizontal : it sloped up gradually to the westward until it was 9,000 feet above sea-level.

Hating the Ice Cap for its death-like peacefulness, Phisto turned his machine towards it, yet kept her climbing that she might maintain an even height above the sloping ice.

'It's getting cold—twenty below already,' said an excited voice through the speaking-tube. 'What d'you think it'll reach ?'

'Absolute zero,' Phisto answered. The boy's eagerness jarred. What was there to get excited about ? New-comers were too often like that : they thought it clever to be uncomfortable—instead of damn' silly.

Flying at 100 m.p.h., they left the mountains and the sea behind. Gradually the view lost its variety : the black peaks dropped below the horizon, and the little machine flew on over the white and lifeless desert which seemed to

stretch endlessly on every side. Phisto hated the Ice Cap for other reasons besides its death-like tranquillity. Although the visibility was excellent, he might, for all practical purposes, have been flying blind. Because there were no landmarks he had to depend entirely on his instruments for judging his direction, speed and altitude. His lateral drift, in the wind which blew obliquely across his course, he could not judge at all. Therefore he knew that he could not hope to steer straight back to the Base. He decided that when he turned he would fly down wind to reach the sea at a point which must be south of his destination, then turn northwards along the coast until he recognised the mountains near the Base. Later, knowing the length of this coastal leg and the angles to it of the other sides of the triangular course, he would be able to plot the flight and the positions where the meteorological observations had been taken.

Meanwhile he thought only of his engine. His whole being became tuned to its steady throbbing as if it were the beating of his heart. If it should falter, his life, and the life of his young companion, would be in instant danger.

Simon's mind was not so fettered. He must keep a check on the time, and every quarter of an hour go through the unpleasant business of taking off a glove and jotting down his observations. But for the rest he could let his thoughts wander as he pleased. He was not in the least anxious. He had complete confidence in his silent pilot. At the back of his mind there was even a half-acknowledged hope that they would make a forced landing—run out of petrol or something—and have to make a hard and thrilling journey to the Base. If Phisto had known of this thought he would have cursed his observer for tempting Providence. Simon was innocent of that intention, but being confident of his young strength he longed to test himself under the same

conditions that his heroes had striven. For years he had been reading about the Arctic, and it had seemed the greatest moment of his life when Fenton invited him to come to East Greenland. But neither the warm, bright days which had greeted them, nor the damp bleak weather of a coastal autumn near the Arctic Circle, had fulfilled his picture of the North. But the great Ice Cap was all that he had dreamed and more—limitless, desolate, mysterious. Up here men and dogs had struggled to fulfil some of the greatest journeys in the history of polar travel. Across a plateau like this Captain Scott's party had struggled to the South Pole, and failed to return. This was the real thing. Only he wished that he need not keep still. The cold, which at first had only tickled his skin, began to take a firmer and firmer grip upon his limbs until its hard fingers seemed to be pressing painfully into his bones. It hurt to breathe. He wouldn't mind if only he could walk.

'Couldn't we land—just for a little?' he called through the speaking-tube.

'Why?'

'To examine the Ice Cap and—and get warm.'

'The Ice Cap is best from a distance,' Phisto's gruff voice came back. 'If we stay in the air you'll be warm within two hours. If we land you may never be.'

They flew on, with the steady drone of the engine in their ears. Simon thought: 'The engine must be boiling hot. Funny to think of it only a yard or two away from me when I'm so cold.' Phisto was thinking: 'She runs well at these revs. But the air must be thinning. Nine thousand feet by the altimeter. That makes the Ice Cap about eight thousand here. Been flying for an hour and twenty minutes. Allowing for wind and climbing at the start, that should mean a hundred and ten miles. Forty more to the highest

point—say twenty-five minutes. Lots of petrol, oil pressure all right. But I'll be glad to turn : that boy's a responsibility.'

He sat at ease in the front cockpit, holding the stick in his double-gloved right hand while he thumped his thigh with his left. When the fingers came to life again he changed hands and thumped his other thigh. He kept the machine pointing just above the line where blue met white, and on a compass bearing of 310° . The steady turning of the engine vibrated comfortingly through his body. Simon, meanwhile, longed to share the engine's warmth.

The steel-blue sky remained clear except for a few feathers of cirrus cloud ; but on ground-level the wind was getting stronger. Little wisps of snow blew from the crest of every drift so that the surface of the Ice Cap looked like a ripe cornfield with its stalks bowing to a gale.

Simon admired this change and remarked on it. Phisto grunted, 'It looks fine from here, but . . .' He stopped suddenly. That half of his brain which from the first moment of the flight had been tuned to the engine recorded a new sound. He leant forward, listening intently. He heard nothing stranger than the beating of his heart, but thenceforward his ears were strained almost intolerably to catch a repetition of that jarring note. At last it came, and the sound was almost a relief because he had been waiting for it so tensely.

'But what ?' asked Simon's voice.

Phisto was puzzled by the question, till he realised that the boy's last train of thought had not been broken. He had noticed nothing. 'But it looks better than it feels,' he said.

If he had been alone, he might have risked holding his course for another quarter of an hour to obtain the final observation. As yet he could trace no definite trouble in the engine, and he liked to round off a job he had begun.

But, if the worst happened, that extra fifteen minutes might add forty miles to a difficult march. With an inexperienced companion it wasn't worth it. He swung the machine round left-handed through 135° and headed her down wind. At least he would stick to his plan of following a triangular course.

' Hallo, have we reached the middle line ? ' came Simon's voice through the earphones.

' Near enough.' Phisto was in no mood to go into details. He was more than ever annoyed with his companion since he had been the unwitting cause of modifying the plans. To make things worse, the engine now seemed to be running perfectly. Phisto could usually trust his instinct or his ears to detect a fault before the gauges did ; but perhaps this time he had been wrong.

Again Simon interrupted him : ' I say, there's a lot of oil coming out of the engine. Doesn't that matter ? '

At the bottom of each cockpit was a trap-door-covered aperture through which survey photographs were taken. Phisto pulled up his trap and saw a spray of oil flying back below the fuselage. His engine was bleeding to death.

He thought slowly and logically, as was his habit. On the ground he could probably find and repair the fault quite easily—a joint worked loose or an exposed pipe blocked by over-cooled oil—and then replenish the sump from the spare cans. He glanced down at the Ice Cap, a thousand feet below. The strengthening wind was now hurrying the snow along in a stream which half-obsured the surface. It would be extremely difficult to judge a landing. Besides, he had noticed before the wind grew strong that the surface was as rough as a stormy sea—corrugated into snowdrifts hard as sandstone. Even if his luck and skill combined to give him a safe landing, even if he found and remedied the

fault, could he be sure of taking off again from that rough surface in rarefied atmosphere 8,000 feet above sea-level? No, he must stay in the air as long as he could. How long would that be? It was impossible to tell. But clearly his time was limited. He must try to hit off the Base direct.

He swung the machine 50° to port, so that he was flying almost on the complement of his outward bearing, but with a 5° margin to allow for the rising wind. What he needed was a landmark. Within half an hour he should pick up the tall mountain to the north of the Base. If he climbed higher he might see it sooner, but he dared not put the engine to the extra strain.

The wind which prevented him from landing was his best chance now. It was blowing obliquely from behind. Even with the engine running slowly he must have a land-speed of well over 100 m.p.h.

Having resolved the problem in his mind he answered Simon's question. 'Yes, it matters a lot. Get your compass out. If you see a mountain ahead—take its bearing.'

Simon grew anxious, but he was too excited to be really alarmed. People didn't get killed on their first flight. They would come through, and he would win his spurs. He must concentrate on the job that had been given him—watch for a landfall.

Phisto's mind was in his engine, suffering with it. It was getting hot and running harshly. He supposed it was bound to crack up long before they reached the Base. But they each had a fortnight's food. That should get them a hundred miles, even allowing for bad weather and a rough surface. Still, they must have an accurate bearing to march on. The undulating ice surface would limit their vision to a few miles. They must sight Base Mountain before they came down. The boy was watching for it, but it was still

below the white horizon. Thank heaven the low sun was behind them—and the wind. Another ten minutes might do it. . . . But now the engine was tearing itself to pieces. . . .

So Phisto's thoughts ran, as painfully he coaxed his motor on.

The end soon came. Like a racehorse caught in a bog the engine came to rest. Phisto dipped the machine's nose to prevent her stalling, and heard Simon's voice exclaim : 'There's a misty thing on the horizon—I think it's a mountain. But it's upside down.'

'Thank God,' breathed Phisto, wondering at his luck. He glanced up, looked carefully and was sure. Base Mountain was still below the horizon ; but it had been thrown up by an evening mirage.

'Get its bearing,' he shouted, and was surprised that his voice sounded so loud now that the engine was dead.

Once more he gave all his attention to his machine. But the brief distraction had cost him dearly. He had lost some 300 feet of altitude. Added to the distance the machine had dropped during the last moments of the engine's life, that left him only about 400 feet above the ice. It was too late to turn about. He must land down wind.

Phisto saw that compared to the drifting snow which masked the surface his machine appeared almost stationary. Yet he guessed that its true speed must be great. An accurate landing was essential, but he could not tell the depth of the drift. Trusting to his luck, he waited till they appeared to be floating in it : then he pulled back the stick and stalled the machine.

She took the ground quite gently, though contact with the surface revealed the secret of her speed. She was moving like a racing car, and as the tail came down she bumped

violently over a little snowdrift. For two or three seconds she sped on in a swirl of snow. Then her skis caught in a large drift, and she turned a somersault.

Simon found himself hanging a few feet above the snow. He loosed his belt and fell out in a heap. He picked himself up quite unhurt, and ran forward to help Phisto from the cockpit. But this was more difficult than he had expected. The shock had been taken by the front half of the fuselage. That was why Simon had scarcely felt it. But the pilot was prisoned between the engine and his seat.

He was unconscious. Simon tried to lift him out, but failed. He glanced round and saw petrol trickling from the buckled tank down towards the over-heated engine. He began to tear the cracked plywood with his hands. Ropes got in his way—the ropes which bound the food and sledging equipment to the fuselage. He whipped out his sheath knife, cut them, and threw the packages aside. Then he fell upon the woodwork, striving like a madman.

All this happened very quickly. In less than half a minute his bleeding hands were raising Phisto's limp body. He staggered with him for ten yards or so; then laid him down and rubbed snow on his face. Phisto opened his eyes. 'Have you salved the sledging gear?' he asked.

'Yes, some of it.'

'Get it all. And pull off the skis if you can. Don't worry about me.'

Reluctantly Simon rose. He felt suddenly tired and conscious of the stiffness of cold and cramped quarters. He moved, then stopped as a long flame leaped from the engine. An explosion threw him on his back. Angrily he jumped to his feet, but could not advance. The whole machine was crackling in a haze of yellow fire. For two hours he had been cold. Now he was beaten by heat. He stood

helplessly watching while the surface snow coalesced into water which froze again as the fire died down.

He turned to see Phisto watching him quizzically from the snow, and his conscience smote him because he had not yet examined his companion's wounds. But Phisto waved him aside. 'I'll do as I am,' he said, his face like dirty snow. 'Tell me—what have you saved ?'

Simon collected the packages he had thrown aside as he fought to free his pilot. There were two sleeping-bags rolled up in their long canvas envelopes, a primus stove full of paraffin, and one sack of food. The other food sack, the little tent, the snowshoes, and the skis of the machine, which might have acted as sledges, had been destroyed.

'A poor collection—but it'll do,' Phisto said. He closed his eyes, his lean face twitching, for one knee was smashed and a broken rib was pressing on his lungs.

Simon stood over him, irresolute. The sky was softly glowing with the indefinite pastel shades of a cloudless sunset ; and it was very cold. Perhaps the wind was lessening ; but the snow still drifted, pattering on his frost-hardened clothes like hail, dusting his hair, powdering the inadequate heap of salvaged stores. This, Simon knew, was a moment of crisis. He had been saved from the crash for some special purpose ; but the cold numbed his brain from realising what it was.

Phisto's emotionless voice brought him back to reality : 'Unroll the sleeping-bags and let's get warm.'

The sleeping-bags were made of two separate quilted layers of eiderdown, covered with long sleeves of windproof cloth, the ends of which could be pulled over a sleeper's head or gathered tightly round his neck. The two men lay side by side, though only Simon ate the pemmican and ship's biscuits.

Phisto cut a palm-full of tobacco from his plug, thrust it carefully into his pipe, and lit it in the shelter of his sleeping-bag. Then he spoke in short sentences between puffs :

'Did you get that bearing ?'

'Of Base Mountain ?'

'Yes.'

'Good work. I congratulate you. What was it ?'

'A hundred and thirty-two degrees.'

'Well, listen. I want you to start off on that course at once. March by night and sleep by day. You'll keep warmer like that. The wind will be behind you. But never go on till you're really tired or you might sleep too long. Whenever a blizzard comes up—and plenty will—roll up in your sleeping-bag and play possum till it's over. Even so you should reach Base Mountain in ten days, so you'll have a margin.'

'What about you ?'

'I'll stay here, thanks. I don't like walking with a broken leg.'

'All right, I'll carry you.'

'Don't be a young ass. I weigh twelve stone. If there were a sledge for me to ride on it might be different. But as it is, good-bye.'

'What about food ?'

'Don't want any. I never did like pemmican.'

'But if I took most of the food—even if I made good time—you'd be dead before a rescue party reached you.'

'And if you didn't you'd be dead before you reached the Base. Neither of us would gain by that.'

'But, good God, are you suggesting that I should take everything and leave you to starve ?'

'Yes.'

'I—I couldn't. I'd be a murderer.'

' You'll be a suicide if you don't.'

There was a long pause while Phisto sucked slowly at his pipe and Simon tried, but failed, to accept this unheroic though logical suggestion.

At last he saw a way out: hopefully he said: ' If we lie here without moving we'll need very little to eat. We might last a month; and before that a search party will have found us.'

' A chance in a million.' Phisto's voice was angry. ' Your bearing of Base Mountain proves we're at least fifteen miles off our course. On this undulating surface a sledge party might pass within a mile and not see us—even if we weren't buried by drift. It might be different if they had another aeroplane. In the end they might find us—but they'd find us dead.'

' They'd find us side by side, close to our burnt machine, and they'd be proud of us,' thought Simon. But he did not dare to put the thought into words. Instead he said: ' I'll take the risk. I'll do what I can for you. I couldn't desert you.'

' What good can you do? You've no medicine-case. You've no bandages or splints. All you could do out of humanity is hit me on the head; but you haven't the guts for that. You think it would be fine to wait beside me till I die—and bury me decently. But by that time you'd have eaten so much of the food, you'd be so devitalised by cold, that you wouldn't have a hope in hell of reaching the Base. Get moving and save one life at least, you blasted little hero.'

' Steady, steady,' said Simon, his hand on his companion's arm. He was warmer now—more the master of his thoughts.

Phisto thrust him aside. ' Steady? You'd shake the Rock of Ages! ' His voice rose. ' Don't you realise, you

blasted young fool, that I'm in hellish pain. All I want is to die. I've no one to mourn me. You've a mother and father. I'm responsible to them—and to Fenton—for your safety. Besides, I loathe the sight of you.'

Simon grew calmer as his companion was roused. The man's anger—the helpless anger of pain—gave him for the first time a sense of superiority.

'Yes, old boy, I've a mother. My father died in the War—went down with his ship. But she'd rather have a dead son than one who had deserted his companion. I've made up my mind. You'd better try to get some sleep.'

'Oh, God,' groaned Phisto to the Arctic night.

For half an hour neither man spoke; then Phisto, steeling himself against the agony of his shattered knee and constricted lung, said in a softer voice: 'Look here, Wentworth. You've got guts and strength of mind. I admire you, and I won't try to deceive you any longer. If I had to die I'd like to do it with you beside me. But I don't want to die. I want like hell to live. As I said, there's no reasonable chance of being rescued if we both stay here. But if you run for the Base with, say, ten days' food, and leave me four—then there's a decent chance for both of us. It's a big thing to ask; but please—for my sake—will you try to get help?'

He waited anxiously for the reply. The wind had dropped to a breeze, and stars winked bravely from a cloudless sky. Surely the boy had regained his will to live.

He had guessed rightly. Simon's healthy young mind had been shocked and puzzled when Phisto had said he wished to die. His last argument appealed more to him. Yet he was not quite convinced.

'But you couldn't live on four days' food till I got back.'

'I think I could if you go fast enough. As you know, I

never eat much. I could live comfortably on less than half rations. It depends on you.'

Simon sat up. He was confident of his strength, and he had been challenged. Hadn't he once on a walking tour covered thirty-five miles a day for a week? He might reach the Base in four or five days, in spite of bad weather—it was less than a hundred miles—and be back again with assistance in no more than double that time.

' You really think I should ? ' he asked.

Phisto grasped his arm. ' As your superior officer I command it—most earnestly.'

It did not take long to divide the food. Simon made a bundle of his share, wrapped it up in his sleeping-bag, and slung it on his back. Then he gathered a faggot of charred wood fragments, wires and twisted pieces of metal. He could make an easily visible line of beacons two or three miles long. That and the known bearing of this place to Base Mountain would make it easy enough to find the wounded man. He didn't want to raise Phisto's hopes, but he believed he could cover over twenty miles a day. He might easily get back with assistance in less than ten days.

Phisto, warm in his sleeping-bag, soothed by his pipe and happy to see how well his plan had succeeded, lay watching with an enigmatic smile on his lean, weather-beaten face. These boy scout precautions and reassuring phrases amused him. He knew the Ice Cap so very well. No one without snowshoes or skis could cover much more than ten miles of its wind-furrowed surface in a day's march. A thirteen-stone athlete like Simon would break through the crust every few yards. He would flounder and tire quickly. But allowing for reasonable weather—and the glass was high—he would get back safely. Ten days' concentrated rations would last him for three weeks : the

extra four days' supply which Phisto was keeping would only have been a burden.

Phisto seemed to see the moves as clearly as the last stages of a game of chess : a pawn racing for the Queen line with the opposing King—hunger—after him. Unless he missed a move the pawn was bound to win. But why was he so slow in starting ?

Now that the actual moment of parting had arrived, doubts—vague doubts that were hard to express—troubled Simon's mind. What should he say ? No doubt he was doing the right thing, yet it went quite against his training to leave a wounded man. The Ice Cap was so vast, so lonely, so cruelly cold, that it seemed hopeless to travel it alone. But, no, that wasn't the reason for his reluctance. It was just that Phisto might need him after he had gone.

'Hurry up, laddy. Everything depends on your speed and strength.'

A strange prickly feeling tickled Simon's skin. 'My speed and strength,' he thought. 'By God, I won't fail him.' He stooped to grasp Phisto's hand—the long bony hand with hairy fingers. 'I won't say good-bye. I'll be back soon with help. *Au revoir*,' he said, and turning lumbered off into the night.

Phisto raised himself on an elbow to watch him out of sight. He smiled when he saw the dim figure stumble over a snowdrift and check as his feet broke through the crust. His cross-country pace slowed to a walk. He was making heavy weather of it, but he would reach the Base in a fortnight. Phisto lay back with a long sigh of relief. It would have spoiled everything if that young fool had insisted on throwing his life away.

Slowly his thoughts formed themselves, as from the first he had half-consciously meant them to. He was not

distracted by hopes of rescue. The only life Simon would save was his own. Phisto expected to die within three or four days. That was how he had always hoped to go—not violently torn from one world and hurled into another; but left with time to adjust his thoughts, time to look forward to reunion with his wife. It was like, in boyhood, nearing the end of a school term—‘In two days I'll be home. In one day I'll be home. I'm going home to-day.’

He remembered the thrill of homecoming after his first term at a boarding school. He had raced the carriage from the station, following the telegraph poles which led straight across the moors. He had carried a prize in his hand—a leather-bound Browning—and it became sadly muddied before he showed it to his father. Browning: he knew how to die.

*'Fear death? to feel the fog in my throat,
The mist in my face,
When the snows begin, and the blasts denote
I am nearing the place. . . .'*

How did it go on? It was so long since he had read it. Oh yes—

*'I was ever a fighter, so—one fight more,
The best and the last.'*

And then, at the end—

*'The elements' rage, the fiend voices that rave,
Shall dwindle, shall blend,
Shall change, shall become first a peace out of pain,
Then a light, then thy breast,
Oh thou soul of my soul. I shall clasp thee again,
And with God be the rest.'*

His father had read that poem to him, saying it was a brave creed of life: only cowards gave in, and those who took their human lives destroyed with them their hope of

life hereafter. In time the boy had lost his strong love of poetry and formed his own logical opinions about life and death. But the strength of that early teaching had remained, with the strength of a foundation which survives a building. Its influence had kept him fighting when there seemed nothing to fight for. During those years he had been afraid to think consecutively about the past. Action had been his drug. He had kept intact the memory of his wife ; but it had been a static memory, like a picture. Now at last he could re-live those six months of their life together, moment by moment ; and when the moment came—he would be ready to go, too.

Phisto lay on his back, watching the stars. The wind had been frozen to death, leaving the white world empty of life and sound. The Ice Cap had become part of Space, in which there is nothing except cold. It seemed wrong to move : wrong to lie warmly in a sleeping-bag. Well, it would not be for long. Thank God, the strong young man who had been his one responsibility would soon escape, while he himself would be claimed by the cold. First it would numb his wounds, then his brain, then his whole body. The first storm would bury him. There could be no better place in which to die. His luck had held to the end.

Phisto lay thus for perhaps three hours. Once or twice he had refilled his pipe, but otherwise he had scarcely moved. Utterly content, he watched the stars sail slowly on their courses ; and his thoughts were in the past. He was disturbed by the insistence of a sound which the snow carried to his ears—a crunching sound. Suddenly there was a shout. Phisto sat up and saw Simon staggering towards him.

His private thoughts scattered to hiding like tangible things. Phisto tried to shield them with sarcasm.

'Hallo, you've been quicker than I thought. How are they at the Base ?'

Simon ignored the tone. 'I couldn't do it. I simply couldn't do it. I took over an hour to walk two miles. It was hellishly cold and lonely. Then I realised that I probably wouldn't get back in time to send a relief party : that I ought not to have left you alone.'

Phisto peered into the boy's face and saw the terror of loneliness in his eyes. The only hope was to drive it out with anger.

'You damned little fraud ! You weren't afraid for my loneliness, you were afraid for your own. You thought you'd die in any case, and that it would look better if you were found beside your companion.'

Simon protested, but Phisto's shaft had gone very near the mark. He had felt so desperately helpless and lonely and tired. If he had been perfectly certain that he was doing the right thing in making for the Base, he was sure he could have won through. But to face such hardships with a mind divided had been too great a test. He had turned back along his line of beacons before it was too late.

There was a pause. Then Phisto spoke slowly and distinctly, as if to a child.

'I've already told you that it hurts me to talk : but you've made me talk more than I have in the last six months. This is my last speech, and every word is true. I've lived my life. I'm not sorry to lose it. Yours is just beginning ; and if you die, it will be my fault. The only thing that worries me about this crash is that it happened when I had a passenger. If only you'll run for the coast—whether or not you get there in time to send out a rescue party—I'll be perfectly content.'

Simon, kneeling in the snow, looked about him and saw

the dim Ice Cap limitless on every side. 'Thank you,' he said at last. 'But I wouldn't enjoy my life if I saved it by deserting you. I'll stay with you till the end—on my own responsibility.'

Phisto said nothing. He gathered his sleeping-bag tightly round him. A moment later Simon followed his example, ducking right inside the flap to escape the cold.

Phisto lay on his back looking at the stars. But he was no longer thinking of the past ; and his eyes showed the struggle that was going on inside his brain.

Once during the night Simon peeped out and saw a shooting star flash down towards the ice. Superstitiously he made a wish for home. Then the cold fastened like a steel trap on his nose, and he pulled the flap of his bag over his head again.

Simon woke after sunrise, refreshed and hungry. Thank goodness, there was still plenty to eat ; and perhaps now that the wind had dropped they could light the stove and have a hot drink. He sat up to invite Phisto to breakfast.

Phisto lay on his back, staring at the sky from which the shooting star had fallen. He was more than half out of his sleeping-bag : his windproof smock and the woollen clothes beneath it had been torn open down the middle, so that his chest was bare. His body was as hard as ice to the touch ; but there was no peace in his face. He had died fighting—as he had lived.

When the numbing horror had subsided, Simon talked to himself, glad of the company of his own voice. 'God forgive me, I oughtn't to have gone to sleep like that and left him—a wounded man—to himself. I suppose he got feverish, or his rib hurt him so much he had to get at it . . .' His voice ran on as hurriedly he scooped a shallow grave.

At the last moment he saw something in Phisto's left hand. It was a piece of paper torn from the log book and folded like the head of a dart—a fit shape for his last message. With difficulty Simon managed to force open the bony hand. Written neatly on the outside of the folded paper were some lines in pencil. 'Give this to Fenton. As a dying man I charge you on your honour to deliver it unopened into his hand.'

A fortnight later an Eskimo ran into the Base hut with the news that a figure could be seen descending the last slopes of the Ice Cap. Fenton, just back from a fruitless sledging journey, went out to meet him alone.

In half an hour he greeted a weary man whose thin cheeks were blistered with frost-bites. As they walked together towards the frozen sea, Simon told his story—told of the crash, of his false start to the Base and why he returned, of Phisto's unselfish and unsuccessful pleading, and of his sudden death.

'What kept me going on the way back was that I had this message for you,' he concluded. 'I felt it was a kind of sacred trust to get it to you—that nothing must stop me. But I couldn't help wondering what was in it—if it was a personal message, or what. Tell me if he says I did well.'

Fenton walked a few paces aside and opened the dart-shaped message. For a full minute he was silent while the weary man stood watching him, swaying a little.

'You did just what Phisto meant you to do,' he said at last. 'And he did for you what I believed he'd never do.' Again the leader was silent, raising his eyes towards the great Ice Cap which had become his friend's sepulchre. Then he crushed the blank sheet of paper in his hand and turned back towards the sea.

CAMBRIDGE IN THE EIGHTIES.

BY WILLIAM JESSE.

How little Cambridge changes ! New buildings rise from time to time on the foundations of the old, and across the river respectable houses for respectable dons occupy what fifty years ago were open meadows ; yet, in spite of the motor-car and aeroplane, the town itself still pulses an air of the seventeenth century. In its little narrow streets, or beneath the great elms that fringe the Backs, one half expects to chance upon some Cavalier or Roundhead, nor would one be greatly surprised to catch a glimpse of Erasmus pacing the cloisters of Queens'. Mercifully the old-fashioned Tories of a hundred years ago refused to have a railway station anywhere near the colleges, and a sight of the Cambridge platform, with its horrible surroundings of white brick architecture, makes one bless the obstinacy of our forefathers.

An American, who entered Trinity in the last year of William IV, wrote an account of university life as it was in his day, and fifty years later—save perhaps in the realm of sport—conditions had little altered. Certainly by that time King's men had been deprived of the privilege which allowed them to claim a degree without sitting for an examination, nor was one any longer compelled to pass the Mathematical Tripos before being permitted to appear for 'honours' in Classics. Greek, however, was still compulsory for the Little-Go, as was also *Paley's Evidences of Christianity*. Fortunately some ingenious person turned this extraordinary piece of logic into a set of jingling rhymes under the title

of 'Paley's Ghost'—many a man has had his portrait hung in his college hall for less—and by committing these to memory one could feel fairly sure of getting the necessary minimum of marks.

There was none of that rush in the eighties that characterises present-day existence. The hansom and the growler were still the only means of transport, except one's two feet, and many a 'Head of a House' and not a few Fellows kept their landau or phaeton. Even bicycles—the old 'penny-farthing' was just being replaced by the 'safety'—were not allowed to be ridden 'within the University precincts.'

Teaching, so far as my experience went, was not too efficient. It is possible, however, that this was due, in part at least, to not having read sufficient of my subject before I went up. Many of the lecturers, whether university professors or college dons, were, to put it mildly, long past their prime. There was, apparently, no age limit. Nor was dentistry so advanced as it is to-day, and a cavern, like a huge gold mine, opening and shutting in the midst of a snow-white beard, did not make a good soundbox. One of my instructors had—in addition to a lame leg, which of course did not affect his speech—a wry neck and a perpetual cold, to ward off the effects of which he invariably tied a long grey stocking round his throat. To do him justice, however, it must be said that he was quite one of the better teachers.

This criticism, of course, does not apply to all. Many of the younger men were excellent. Roberts of John's—whose early death deprived both his college and university of a brilliant personality—Marr, afterwards Professor of Geology, and Heycock of King's among others were first-rate in their respective subjects. Another delightful fellow was Arthur Shipley—later on Master of Christ's—who was a most cheery

soul at a period when dons were still prone to maintain an air of aloofness towards their pupils.

There must be still some who remember dear old Alfred Newton, Professor of Zoology, and his Sunday evenings at Magdalene. There was nearly always someone present of world-wide fame, and many of those who came so regularly became well-known men in after life. Newton had one peculiarity. He hated anyone to smoke anything except a pipe, or to light it with aught else than a cedar spill. On the centre table was a stone jar filled with an excellent brand of 'shag,' and on the mantelpiece were two more containing these cedar spills. If anyone by chance pulled out a box of matches, the old gentleman would hurriedly limp across the room—one of his legs was a little shorter than the other—take a spill, and, lighting it at the fire, solemnly hand it to the delinquent.

In 1881 new Statutes came into force removing celibacy from the list of qualifications for retaining a 'fellowship,' with the natural result that 1882 was in very truth a year of brides. Though most of the old Fellows—and some were very old—remained bachelors to the end of their days, a large proportion of the younger lot took unto themselves wives, so that it was not only in 'May Week' that skirts and bonnets, other than those of 'bedders,' were to be seen in the courts.

The monastic atmosphere which had hung over the town for six centuries had already been scattered by the invasion of the 'bright girl graduate with her golden hair' a few years earlier. The young ladies from Girton drove into Cambridge in wagonettes, while their sisters from Newnham walked. Both parties were decorously and effectively chaperoned by stern-looking females in black, who sat on a chair near the door of the lecture-room. Outside there

was no mingling of the sexes at all. It was possible occasionally to obtain special permission to visit a sister or near relation, but even then certain formalities had to be observed, and the presence of a duenna, which was invariably insisted on, tended to cramp the visitor's style.

There was very little in the conversation of the eighties—certainly not in the presence of ladies—of the nature referred to some time ago in the *Granta* and the *Cherwell*; nor would it have been true to say that ‘the proverbial bargee speaks pulpit prose in comparison with the casual conversation of modern undergraduates.’ A clever *double-entendre* would then, as always, raise a laugh, but Rabelaisian wit was not encouraged, while to mention any woman’s name lightly in company was something ‘not done.’ No doubt there has ever been a tendency on the part of older people to compare the present unfavourably with the past—*autres temps, autres mœurs*—but is one necessarily ‘a prude’ if one feels that perhaps the generation of to-day has lost something of its delicacy?

The ladies were already proving that they could hold their own in the examination-hall. Miss Ramsay of Girton had headed the Classical Tripos of her year, while Miss Fawcett of Newnham, not to be outdone, was listed ‘above the Senior Wrangler’! The former married the Master of Trinity, and their son, who later was also a distinguished member of the university, was irreverently referred to as ‘Little Herodotus.’

Probably the women on the whole worked harder than the men. Public opinion was still much against higher education for girls, who—particularly those of the upper classes—were taught by governesses, or went to schools of the ‘finishing’ type. They did not go to college to have a good time. They were pioneers in the Women’s Move-

ment. They had to justify themselves, and they took their responsibilities very seriously.

Rowing, of course, held the premier position in the field of Sport, and a place in 'the boat' the greatest honour to which one could aspire. There were only two 'Divisions,' either in the 'Lents' or the 'Mays'—why the 'Mays,' when they are always rowed in June? One always felt a great respect for rowing men—at least I did—since most had a long way to run to the river and back. Unless one joined a few others in a hansom, there was no other means of transport.

One of the Presidents in my day was the famous S. D. Muttlebury. He was a 'character,' and there were many stories about him—most of them in all probability apocryphal. One bitter day during the 'lents' I was running along the tow-path urging my college boat, between gasps, to further efforts, when I heard a shout behind me, 'D——n you, sir! Get out of the way!' I turned to find 'Muttle,' who was acting as umpire, and his old white horse, just on top of me. I hurled myself down the bank and almost into the river. Nevertheless, as I hurried back to my rooms that evening, I was as proud as Punch, for had I not been sworn at by the President of the C.U.B.C.! On another occasion I was walking along St. Andrew's Street, when I saw Gardiner of Emmanuel and a friend accompanied by a little dog. The last, as all dogs will, went across the road to inspect a lamp-post, and at that moment his master opened the door of his lodgings, and disappeared within with his companion. The little fellow ran up and down searching everywhere. Seizing him in my arms—luckily he didn't bite—I carried him to the door and knocked. Gardiner himself opened it, and I had the felicity of being thanked by the Varsity 'stroke.' What heroes we regarded these 'blues' when we were young! Nearly forty years later

I was asked to join a supper-table at a dance in Kenya, and was astonished to find that my neighbour on my left was a nephew of the old 'stroke,' while the President's son was just opposite me !

It was somewhere about this time that the *Granta* made its first appearance. There had been a falling-off in Cambridge rowing, and the Oxford President, in supporting some request from the sister university, urged as a reason that the latter were 'a poorer lot than usual.' Great was the wrath of the average undergraduate, and a very clever set of verses under the above title—written, if my memory serves me, by the late R. C. Lehmann—came out in the following number. It referred, I think, to a general meeting which was held. At this distance of time I can only hazily recollect one verse, which ran somewhat as follows :

'Came the pious youths of Selwyn, and the burly men of Clare,
Of Sidney, Queens', and Jesus who had heard of the affair,
While the baby boys of Cavendish came rolling in their prams,
With a poorer lot than usual of lollipops and jams.'

There was quite an excitement over the incident, partly wrathful, partly amused. However, things were smoothed over handsomely by Oxford, and, so far as I remember, we were equally handsomely beaten. Cavendish was a college which had been founded with the idea of reducing the expenses of a university course, by permitting its members to come up at an earlier age, and at considerably lower fees. It was greatly handicapped by its distance from the other colleges, and a few years later it was closed, and its buildings taken over as a Training College.

It was during the Lent Races of 1887 or 1888 that a ghastly accident occurred, which was followed by the order that every boat should carry a ball on the prow. Clare had just made a bump, and victor and vanquished were drawing into

the bank. Immediately behind was a Hall crew, closely pursued in its turn. Quite how it happened was never certain. Probably the Hall cox turned his head for a moment to see his position, and the sun, which was now low in the west, blinded him. Anyway, he did not see what was in front, and before he realised his danger he had rammed the Clare boat. The sharp iron prow pierced poor Campbell's heart, and he was killed instantly. A tragic ending to that term's racing.

A similar accident, mercifully without such a terrible sequel, occurred two or three years later. On this occasion Corpus had a wonderful crew, captained by Fyson, the 'blue.' It was very fast and beautifully together, and, had it been Head of the River, would probably have remained there. As it was, it was very low down in the First Division, and was certain of making four bumps. Just behind was Lady Margaret II—a poor lot—and behind them again First Trinity III, which was fast for its place. The gun went, and at the same moment there went up a cry of mingled rage and terror. The Corpus cox, as he let go the chain handle, somehow or other dropped it into the stern, with the result that the eight was anchored, and began to turn into the bank. Had that been all, Corpus would merely have lost a place—quite bad enough!—but unfortunately Trinity was coming up with a rush, and the Lady Margaret cox lost his head. Instead of letting his eight row past the anchored galleon and claiming the bump, he made straight for the unfortunate crew. It was an awful moment. With their feet under the stretcher-straps they had no chance whatever of getting out of the way. In an instant the bow of Lady Margaret tore through the Corpus stern grazing the cox, passed under stroke's armpit, and on past seven and six before it stopped. The brand-new shell, which

Corpus had specially purchased for their triumphant rise, split into two perfect halves like a pod, and the peas, in the shape of eight raging and one miserable man, waded to the shore. How no one was even injured still remains a mystery.

Rugger, in the case of the Varsity matches, was played on the Corpus ground, and Soccer on Parker's Piece. Hockey was not formally recognised, and did not even reach the rank of a 'half-blue' until much later. There was a prejudice against it as likely to interfere with football, and perhaps still more with the boats. Picking up an old Hazell's *Annual* recently I saw that as late as 1905 there were no less than eight colleges each with fewer than a hundred undergraduates—Magdalene had only thirty-six—and it was not always possible to get together representative teams. Marlborough and Rossall were the only two important schools that played hockey regularly, and they provided most of the really good players in the university. Not a few of the members of the various college elevens used sticks cut from the hedge, while matches were confined almost entirely to the Lent term.

Although it was perfectly permissible to wear pads and gloves at cricket, nothing in the shape of protectors was allowed in either football or hockey as savouring of professionalism. The first player I ever saw wearing ear-caps was the late 'Sammy' Woods in the 'Freshers' match in '88. His example was soon followed, with the result that torn ears and poisoned head-wounds rapidly diminished.

The Rugby game was not so fast then as it is now. There was one back, three three-quarters (later four were tried), and two halves. These were chosen naturally for speed, but the nine forwards had to show plenty of avoirdupois, and the capacity for shoving and overrunning the opponents. 'Scrumbs,' and lengthy ones, were constant, while 'heeling-

out' as a science had not yet come in. The 'pack'—well wedged together, the ball gripped between the feet of the man in the middle of the front row—would try to rush the opposing lot off their balance and break through. McDonnell, an Irish International, came up to Pembroke, and was given his 'blue' as a forward in his first year. He was light and extremely quick, and very adroit in getting the ball from the scrum, when away he would go twisting and dodging until he could get it out to a three-quarter. His tactics, however, were regarded as unorthodox, and after his first season he was dropped. These lengthy scrums gave a certain amount of rest to the outsides, as also did the 'maul.' A man would rush over the line, but, before he could touch down, one of the defenders would seize him, and a sort of wrestling match would ensue, both teams looking on, until the ball was grounded, and the necessary decision given by the umpire.

Soccer was played by the smaller colleges only during the Lent term, and this handicapped them when they happened to have a promising player, as he had comparatively little chance of attracting notice. The Varsity team usually contained a preponderance of men from Charterhouse, Malvern, and Repton, with a sprinkling from Aldenham, Shrewsbury and one or two other establishments. There was a good deal of snobbery in those days in the awarding of 'blues.' It is only natural that a young fellow coming up with a high reputation, and joining a particularly athletic college, should have a bit of a pull. But fifty years ago the great majority of undergraduates came from the public schools, and those who could not boast of a connection with one of them were at a distinct disadvantage. It was the same with men from the smaller colleges. It would be quite easy, even at this distance of time, to give half a dozen names,

well
the
ush
gh.
ke,
ear.
in
go
ree-
ox,
thy
also
out,
uld
oth
the

the
ned
tittle
con-
ern,
ury
ood
ues.'
h a
ge,
reat
ools,
e of
with
easy,
nes,

who, had they come from one of the more fashionable institutions, or from one of the larger colleges, would have been almost certainly selected. To judge from the present lists there is far less of this snobbishness, and a very good thing.

Lawn tennis, though it only emerged from the original 'sphairosticke' about 1875, was almost as popular then as it is now. Every college had its courts, while 'Paradise' was always crowded. Golf, on the other hand, if played at all, was confined to a very few. Seeing that a brilliant scarlet coat was practically *de rigueur* in those days—most courses were on public commons, and it was necessary to warn pedestrians—had there been many enthusiasts it would have been difficult to have overlooked them. Lacrosse, fine game that it is, never took on, probably on account of the claims of other sports. A certain number, however, belonged to the Cambridge University Lacrosse Club, and played matches with the Leys School, and a few outside clubs. Athletics and cross-country running occupied many throughout the October and the Lent terms. The rule that selection to represent the University was nearly always decided by the actual performances of the competitors was an excellent one, and reduced favouritism to a minimum.

An institution which had a somewhat uphill struggle against prejudice was the Cambridge University Volunteers, usually contemptuously referred to as the 'Bugshooters.' Few realise the invaluable work done by these enthusiasts at both universities. In later years, as the O.T.C., their members were to prove their worth in the Great War. A writer describing Cambridge in the eighties says :

'Cattle grazed and ruminated over Herschel Road, and by the banks of the Binn Brook. The University Volunteers careered unrestricted, with an occasional interlude by the

Polo Club, over a vast prairie now bisected by Cranmer Road, and Selwyn Gardens were literally what their present name denotes.'

The uniform of those days was singularly uncomfortable. It was grey-blue in colour, giving the appearance of having been made out of grandfather's discarded dressing-gown. The Snider had been replaced by the Martini-Henry, which, if it didn't kick quite as much as its predecessor, was prone to leave the careless marksman with a bruised and swollen cheek. The Colonel was A. P. Humphry, Senior Esquire Bedell, who was a magnificent shot, especially at long ranges, and had won the Queen's Prize in 1871 at the age of twenty-one.

Some of the cricket teams of those years were rather more than the average, but there must be many who remember one lot coming badly to grief at the hands of 'W. G.' Cambridge had not been doing badly, and were perhaps a little too sure of themselves. Anyhow, the 'Old Man' put himself on to bowl, and disposed of one batsman after another. One can still hear Grace's chuckle following each disconsolate cricketer to the pavilion.

During the summer the bathing-place of the University Swimming Club was crowded, especially on Sunday mornings after chapel. One of the regular frequenters was Oscar Browning, Fellow of King's, and a well-known character. One very hot day there were a number of us present, including 'O. B.' It was the latter's invariable custom, after coming out of the water, to wrap an enormous towel round himself, and, slipping off his bathing-drawers, to climb to the top diving-board and sit in the sun. On this occasion, just as he reached the summit, he had the misfortune to step on his towel and give it a sudden tug. Before he could clutch it, it fell, and there he stood like a rather stout piece of Greek

statuary exposed to the gaze of a ribald crowd of undergraduates, while two of his favourite pupils seized the towel, and amidst the cheers of the audience once more restored the unfortunate man to a more respectable condition.

The club used to select a team to swim against Oxford, and not unnaturally was anxious that its representatives should be permitted to wear a 'half-blue.' The story goes that a deputation went to call on Muttlebury, whose support, as President of the C.U.B.C., they were anxious to obtain. The knock on the door being answered, they entered the room and explained the object of their visit. Muttlebury turned to the spokesman of the party and said, 'Very well. Have your men ready at eight to-morrow morning, and I will see what you can do. Good evening, gentlemen!' Punctually next day at 8 a.m. Muttlebury was at the rendezvous, where a number of men suitably garbed were awaiting him. In a few seconds the President, having divested himself of his garments, asked the Captain what was the first distance, and was told that it was the 100 yards. The selected representatives took up their stations, and at the word 'go' leapt into the water accompanied by Muttlebury himself, who won the race easily. Two other events followed with the same result. Then came high-diving, and once again Muttlebury was first. Without saying a word the great man went straight back to the dressing-room, got into his clothes and strode off.

I never heard the sequel, but, as a 'half-blue' was granted not long afterwards, one must suppose that the President was more sympathetic than he appeared.

Fifty years ago there were no cinemas, nor wireless. Even the gramophone was as yet undreamed of. But there were, of course, the 'Penny Pops,' which the

musical societies of the various colleges took it in turns to give at the Corn Exchange. Theatrical companies used to come up constantly. One can still hear Lottie Collins singing her 'Taraaboomdeay,' and watch that most charming of actresses, Maud Millett, in the name part of 'Sweet Lavender.' Her photograph was to be found on the mantelpiece of every self-respecting undergraduate. Her early marriage deprived the Stage of one who would have risen to the highest rank in her profession, while few realised the fineness of her character, nor how much she did to help those in need.

But, if there was not the variety of amusement that exists to-day, there was any amount of social life. In the afternoons, particularly during the winter and early spring, we would drop in upon one another for tea—there were neither restaurants nor cafés in the town—while, after Hall, we drifted along for coffee or cocoa, and, provided one was not 'reading' for some exam., stayed on for music or nap—more rarely whist. Cigarettes were not so universal as now, and they were largely rolled by the smoker himself, but most of us preferred pipes. There was a craze just then for colouring meerschaums. The great thing was to get an absolutely even line about two-thirds up the bowl. On a knock being heard, a general shout would go up urging the intruder to open the door very carefully, while our hands went round our pipes to keep off any possible draught which might affect the regularity of the line, so that we must have looked as though we were taking part in some incantation scene.

'Colours' were worn somewhat indiscriminately. A tennis blazer and a cricket tie, combined with an 'old school' scarf or sweater, was no uncommon combination. Towards the end of the Boer War there was a tendency to

wear a panama with a black ribbon, but this gradually died out and the old fashion came back. Nowadays the craze for 'colours' seems greater than ever, but with this difference—that, whereas formerly only those wore them who were entitled to do so, the present-day youth seems most catholic in his choice, and is no respecter of either persons or institutions.

No college fifty years ago had either baths or electric light. On returning from the river or football-field, your gyp dragged a tin tray from under your bed, and poured in a can of hot water. As the floor was rarely even, this gave you a depth of about half an inch on one side, and left you perfectly dry on the other.

Peterhouse was the first institution to enjoy electric light, which was a gift, I believe, of the famous physicist and inventor, Lord Kelvin, a former member of the college.

Old photographs show how fashions have changed. Almost everyone wore a moustache—a few still sported whiskers. A well-known sight on the river was a gentleman who went by the name of the 'Emmanuel Pink'un,' whose flaming hirsute appendages of the 'Dundreary' type clashed badly with his boating blazer. Collars were starched and upright—often with turned-down points. Knickerbockers were popular with cyclists and on the village tennis-court—anyone will realise this who looks over an old volume of *Punch* and studies Du Maurier's drawings—but at the Varsity everybody wore trousers. Flannels were quite as voluminous as 'Oxford bags,' but were decidedly better cut. The correct shape allowed the crease to fall just behind the tip of the shoe—shoes tended to be pointed—while the material was somewhat gaudily striped.

There was a certain amount of 'ragging' in some colleges, but it was usually confined to bump suppers and similar

occasions. The fifth of November generally produced the usual crop of black eyes and swollen noses, but, unless you were thirsting for a scrap, and were prepared to risk paying a heavy fine into the university chest, it was wiser on Guy Fawkes night to remain in college. Theatrical audiences were always likely to be hilarious, especially if some well-known 'favourite' was appearing, yet I never remember any serious ill-feeling. Whatever our misdemeanours, if any damage was done, we were always prepared to pay for it, and reparation, as a rule, was on the generous side.

Some time after I went down there occurred the famous 'Spinning-House Scandal.' The two older universities have, or had, considerable disciplinary powers, not merely over its members, but over the townsfolk as well, which throughout the centuries has always caused a certain amount of jealousy and friction.

The Spinning-House was a building not far from Downing belonging to the University, and used by the proctors as a kind of 'house of correction' for ladies suspected of leading an irregular life. The case arose from the apprehension of a certain person known as 'Daisy.' Whether she had been unfairly treated or otherwise was not so much the point as that the Civic authorities had seized upon the opportunity to raise the whole question of the University's rights. Whatever good cause there may have been in early days for granting these powers, they had mostly become anachronisms. At this distance of time it is difficult to recollect the result of the trial, but I believe that the Spinning-House, if it still exists, has been put to other uses, while the University has been shorn, probably without much regret, of some of its ancient privileges. That the proctors did sometimes make bad mistakes has to be acknowledged, but theirs was a very difficult task. There is a story that during one May

Week two young ladies were observed walking along King's Parade escorted by a couple of undergraduates. In spite of their united protests that they were relations—which turned out to be the truth—they were forthwith conducted to the Spinning-House. It happened that the girls were actually connected with a very senior dignitary of the University, and, a message having been conveyed to him, that gentleman's carriage and pair duly arrived, and drove them back to respectability under the wing of their chaperon.

When the War had ended and the halls and lecture-rooms had begun to fill once more, it was said that Cambridge, as we had known her, was finished, and that the old traditions and customs would never be revived. But a certain number of her sons who had survived the trenches, the gas, the gun, the submarine returned and it is to them that these traditions, which had their roots buried in the distant past, were preserved. To them we owe a debt which can never be repaid.

But, if undergraduate life is much the same as it has always been, there have been many material additions and alterations in the half-century that has passed. The hansom has been replaced by the taxi, the 'penny-pop' by the cinema; the restaurant and the tea-shop have come to stay; while the disappearance of the moustache gives us old-timers a feeling that our successors are a younger lot than they were in our day.

As for the new buildings, many commemorate those who gave their lives in the terrible four years. Some are in keeping with the older architecture, and to those whose memory lingers in the past they appeal, but one does not feel so sure when one gazes upon the University Library.

One presumes the swans—or their descendants—are still at

Emmanuel. (Do the 'young gentlemen' still on occasion introduce them into the Dean's bed?) The newly fledged graduate from Caius still passes through the Gate of Honour. Doubtless the fountain in Trinity Great Court continues to justify its existence as a bath for the obstreperous; and budding Miltos recline under the mulberry-tree in Christ's.

Nothing can spoil the beauty of the Backs. The motor-car may tear past between 'Cats' and Corpus, the aeroplane may soar over King's Chapel, but the nightingale will always sing through the summer night in the Fellows' gardens, and make their nests in the clinging ivy. With all her charm, Oxford has nothing which quite compares with them. Whether it be in the early spring, when the rooks are repairing their homes in the lofty elms, or in the summer, when these same elms are covered in their 'garland of green,' or in the autumn in their dress of russet, or yet once more when winter has stripped them bare, and the Snow Queen in her modesty has covered their nakedness with a mantle of white, the Backs are a dream of loveliness. And the Cam still slowly winds along her reedy bed, as she has done ever since Hugh de Balsham, Bishop of Ely, established one fine day in the year of Our Lord 1281 his 'studious schollars living according to the rule of the schollars of Oxford called Merton' in those early buildings dedicated to St. Peter of the Keys, which have expanded, as the centuries have passed, into our great unchanged and unchanging university.

THE FUGITIVE.

*The ghost of a melody, walking lone
on a wind-blown slope
of the dawn.*

*A singer heard it : he caught its note
in his golden throat,
where it sobbed for a breath and was gone.*

*A poet heard it, his ears astrain
for the faint refrain
of a song :*

*He built it a prison-house of rhyme,
he drilled its time,
but its dancing feet
fled on.*

*A harpist heard it : he caged its wings
behind silver strings,
but it slipped through the bars and was gone.*

*For none could trap its elusive, faint,
far-away complaint,
its snatch of unearthly song,*

*This ghost of a melody, walking alone
on a wind-blown slope
of the dawn.*

A. V. STUART.

PROVENÇAL WINDS AND WEATHER.

BY HENRY HARDINGE.

It is late March, the season when Spring in Provence holds the loveliest of her courts, although she is still on tiptoe, eager but not quite sure of the permanency of her reign. She advances smilingly, but lifts her skirt ready for a temporary flight if the *mistral* should come down suddenly shouting the battle-cry of old Winter who yet lingers on the hills and now and then lashes back with a rear-guard skirmish.

Under it all, however, is an exultant sense that his power is broken. The almond trees began to brave him weeks ago with a few scattered blossoms, forerunners of the masses of bloom which now look like rosy clouds resting here and there on the hillsides, just beginning to show the golden-green tinge of the following leaves. The earlier song-birds are in full voice, and small blue butterflies and larger white ones flutter about the flower-beds in which the bees are loudly busy. Later in the day when the declining sun gives the signal, small green tree-frogs will open their trilling chorus in the shrubbery of the garden.

But Spring in Provence would not be truly Provençale if she hastened. She orders her ways by the accepted code which regulates conduct, individual and collective, everywhere in this ancient realm of love and song—*ça ne presse pas*; there's no hurry. It is as characteristic as the *Mañana* of the Mexican, and means about the same thing. Never do anything until you absolutely have to. And she does not have to. There are ten good months for the awakening, the putting forth, the flourishing, the fruition and the linger-

ing to sleep again. She can take at least three months for her part before beginning in the North where the whole programme must be played through in a scant three weeks.

The migrants, with their large knowledge of the latitudes and the influences and effects of climate, wait to see her government more firmly established before extending their recognition. Not before early April will the scouting bands of the swallows come. At that season you must not watch the sky throughout the week ; wait until Sunday and then look diligently so that you may see the first one on that day and thereby win good luck. In another fortnight after that you may hear the cuckoo, always, it seems, far off, and in a month the nightingale will begin to sing in half-voice.

Those plants of the waste lands and the gardens which are more willing to endure the vicissitudes of a still turbulent régime, which were swifter in their first gesture of response, seem to be overtaken by a mood of hesitation. One can hardly note progress from day to day, even from week to week. Not until June brings its warm nights is there real exuberance, and then it seems to pass all too quickly into the heat of summer with the incessant, dry, vibrating chant of the cicadas. With that comes the drouth, the months which in their total effect class the region as semi-arid.

It is said that (like studied ugliness in painting and sculpture, and in writing) the phenomenon is modern ; that in the time of the Romans the valleys grew so luxuriantly as to make it difficult to keep the roads open, and the *mistral* did not blow ; that deforestation has worked the change. Be that as it may, this land of hills and valleys, upon which the eye of the Lord seems to rest lovingly from the beginning of the year until the end of the year, is no longer watered by the rain from heaven between the months of May and

October, and everything that cannot adapt itself to the conditions must be maintained by irrigation.

This is the phase of the climate which has given rise to the tradition of 'perpetual sunshine,' a tradition fostered by hotel-keepers and tradesmen catering to visitors and by sundry local organisations and administrations hoping to attract more guests who would come to bask, and remain, for a while at least, to pay sojourn taxes and luxury taxes and thus help to pay for sewers and Vespaïennes. They caught at the slogan (to use a word dear to Rotarians everywhere), never suspecting that among hardy Nordics the slogan—if you will pardon a mixing of metaphors—might prove a boomerang. One good old lady whose religion is as austere as her skies, when she heard that I was really getting a little place in St. Gaston, wrote me a most serious warning against the degradation of physical and above all of moral fibre induced by life amidst 'too perpetual sunshine.' She was only partly comforted when I assured her that it was not really too perpetual; perhaps more than slightly perpetual, but at most only at certain times rather perpetual.

There is more of it, of course, than there is in England, even in the Isle of Wight, but not more than in a very large part of the United States. The difference is in character rather than in quantity. There is a sort of magical quality in the skies of the Littoral with their stupendous cloud effects, their splendid vapour masses rolling up from the Mediterranean, their reverberation of colour reflected from the hills and the sea. The sunshine seems to saturate instead of merely traversing the atmosphere. It makes of it a subtly tinted, often indeed a richly tinted, luminous solution that dissolves the edges of everything seen through it. The distance is almost opalescent, the sky a little thickened against

the crest of the hills, the edge of the hills softened to meet the sky so that they seem half-fused the one into the other.

The effect heightens as summer advances and the rising heat draws the moisture from the earth, and (one is tempted to say) with it colour which remains suspended in the air. Values in the foreground grow duller while those of the farther planes are enriched. But now in March all are more limpid, and the near by is splashed and checkered with vivid young green, with the pale and deep rose of fruit blossoms, with scarlet carpets of wild tulips in the vineyards, mauve borders of anemones along the ditches, lilac and purple of the Mediterranean heath and rosemary on the hills, gleams of golden gorse in the waste lands everywhere.

With exception of the orchard trees, however, almost all these plants are native sons and daughters, accustomed to live dangerously, to seize the first chance to push into life and to take the risks that all pioneers and adventurers must run. It is only the wild earth or the narrow borders and dikes untoouchable by the cultivator that are yet verdant. The acres under servitude, under human protection to be repaid by tribute, are most of them still bare and their future population unborn. A few marauders have broken through and are gorging hastily before punishment can reach them. The wild tulip, the sun's eye as the French call it because of its violet centre in the scarlet circle of the petals, is most conspicuous. It seems to be actually quivering with haste to live and love and bear before the ploughshare casts it out. But even the tulip does not venture nearer ~~in~~ than the vineyards. You will not find it in your vegetable or flower beds. They will be green enough with weeds later on, worse luck ! but hardly as yet.

The Père Dallibert (as my old Provençal gardener is always called), like his garden, is marking time, preparing

ground for the seedlings soon to follow, protecting precocious growth from dangers of late frosts, beginning his campaign against the ravages of birds, snails, ants, multipeds, mole-crickets. The vineyards and orchards must be ploughed ; it is the last month for setting slips or planting young trees, and if you want a good melon-bed, his proverbs say, you must make it at St. Joseph's day, the 25th. On the whole, however, the weather is less anxiously watched than it will be during the next two months. 'March rains bring no gains,' says another proverb ; they are too early ; but as to April, the saw runs that while it has only thirty days 'if on thirty-one rain fall, it will do no harm at all.' 'April cold gives wine and bread ; cold in May will leave them dead.'

The old man's concept of the agencies at work is highly personalised. The principal power back of it all, as he sees it, is of course the sun, but the sun is a steady old fellow who goes his rounds systematically, leaving the play of affairs on the earth largely to the moon, who is almost as notional as he is stolid. That is, she has a great many whims which you must know and respect if you want to keep out of trouble. The lower agencies, rain, drouth, heat, cold, the winds, to Dallibert are entities. The winds especially are creatures with names. They exist definitely and continuously whether or not they happen to be blowing at the moment, just as you exist even if you are in London or New York instead of here with us. He never speaks nor thinks of them by compass direction ; indeed, the Provençal peasant does not orient anything by the compass. If you talk to him about the south-east or the nor'west he looks puzzled and says 'Ma foi !'

There are four quarters to the earth and the sky. The first is the *midi*, the direction of the sun at noon, the south ; it is

most often spoken of because exposure on that side means warmth and light in the house and sunshine in the fields and gardens. Then there is the *levant*, the rising, where the sun comes up, and the *couchant*, the going-to-bed, where he sets. Lastly there is the sinister, the hostile, the cold northern quarter, the *mistral*. It takes its name from the shrieking, plunging north-westerly gale that roars down the valley of the Rhone below Valence, out over the Gulf of the Lion and eastward along the coast, striking here and there with diminishing force even to Menton. When it does, the smoke and fire blow down the chimney and out into the room, work out of doors almost stops, and in some regions (near Avignon, for example) railway trains are delayed. There the plantations are crossed by windbreaks of stiff cypresses or interwoven canes ten yards apart. As the *mistral* passes out to sea it catches the crests in localised cyclonic whirls of spindrift that go careering off like the bases of small waterspouts.

The course of the *mistral* seems erratic because we do not know the laws it obeys and do not see the aerial obstacles it leaps to come down beyond, the invisible air-cushions against which it cannons or between which it crowds desperately. If you want to establish yourself anywhere in its domain (the valley of the Rhone or of the lower Durance, and eastward at least to Nice), whether for a picnic luncheon or for life, there is only one safe rule. Watch the *mistral* in action and choose a spot where it does not strike. I have sat down in an open plateau on the top of the Baou Calental, reached after a fierce struggle through the gale, and spread out my newspaper in a calm undisturbed except by trifling puffs, while a hundred yards away the trees, bent half-way over, tugged at their roots in the effort to give up, lie down, and have done with it.

St. Gaston, behind high hill ramparts on the landward side, does not have to battle strenuously with the *mistral*, but it does have to face the complementary wind, the *labé* (or *labech*), an on-shore gale from the south-west. When it blows hard the green water comes over the jetty and the white water goes over the lantern of the lighthouse. The fishermen, who carry umbrellas when it looks like rain, do not go out at all. Once or twice a year we have a day of *sirocco*, the hot south wind from Africa which dries up growing things like a blast from a furnace. In winter and spring the prevailing wind is the *largade*, south-easterly, more often called simply the 'wind of the sea' or the 'wind of the rain,' for it is often, though by no means always, wet. When it backs a little farther it is the *levant*, a moderate easterly blow or a dry north-easter.

Dallibert thinks of the winds as semi-independent powers, but he believes there are certain fixed inter-relations. A misty moon will bring either wind or rain. Not merely predict it, mind you—attract it. A very hot sun will provoke a storm. A light rain will 'draw' a strong *mistral*, and a heavy rain will draw only a light *mistral*. When, as very often happens, a *mistral* comes down when there has been no rain at all—*ma foi*, there has been a rain somewhere near that has drawn it. If it begins in the night it will not last long, but if it comes up with the sun it will last several days. You are in for a spell of it.

The old man makes his weather forecasts by a sort of general sense, but he watches continually for a number of signs : the aspects of the sun, the moon and the stars, the clouds, the characteristics of raindrops or snowflakes, of the thunder or the rainbow. He finds portents in the respiration of the wind, in odours, in the condition of the salt in the kitchen, of the surfaces of wood, iron or marble,

in the sound made by the ploughshare in the earth and the feel of the spade and the hoe as they turn the soil, in the fall of the soot in the chimney and the appearance of the candle-flame, or the action of the wick as it burns.

All the creatures are his counsellors. The bat flying wide and high, crows calling in the morning, the screech-owl meowing in the rain, gnats engrossed in dancing in a thick swarm at sunset—these are signs of good weather just ahead. Warnings of rain and storm are more numerous. The peacock crying, pigeons coming late into the cote at night, bees lingering near the hive or returning quickly only half-laden, the cock crowing at evening dusk or any unseasonable hour, hens ruffling much in the dust, spiders wandering about and changing their lairs, sparrows making a great noise of chirping and perching on the roof-tiles, flies biting and sticking, swallows flying close to the ground, frogs croaking louder than their wont, toads coming quite out of their holes at twilight, worms emerging from their burrows, cattle and especially sheep eating extra-greedily . . .

Wholly unscientific. To which he would reply by another folk-saying : ‘ L’espérience passo sciènci. Vaqui ço qu’èi.’ ‘ Experience beats science, and there’s what it is ! ’

Southern Provence.

POOR MISS FRY.

BY M. DE B. DALY.

WHEN Miss Susan Fry came to Sant'Anna¹ everybody spoke of her as 'poor little Miss Fry.' She was so small, so gentle, and so obviously hard up that there seemed no other way of mentioning her. She had drifted into the 'Pension Scarelli,' as Englishwomen do drift into Continental boarding-houses, in search of cheap living and a good climate. The living before long became no cheaper than anywhere else, and even the weather, if one listened to the wiseacres, was consistently worse than ever before. Miss Fry, however, remained at the *pension*, partly because the Scarelli family was good to her and partly because she had not the initiative to go anywhere else. Occasionally she gave lessons in English to Italian shopkeepers, who paid badly, but since she taught badly the arrangement was fair enough. Sometimes she added to her income by looking after the very young or very old, but as her iron-grey hair became white, her skin wrinkled and her blue eyes faded, such employment was rare. On several occasions she told the Signora that she intended to leave and take a room in the village. The Signora always burst into tears and begged to be told why the Signorina was dissatisfied. Miss Fry indignantly denied the accusation, but explained that such queer things happened to money nowadays that it was always less than it really was. She could not afford the luxury of 'Pension Scarelli,' and so, though it made her very

¹ 'Interlude at Sant Anna' appeared in CORNHILL, October, 1936.

unhappy to leave the Signora, and the children, and Signor Carlo . . . and Teresa . . . and Paolina . . . then she too wept a little.

In the end the Signora always reduced her low charges still further, and Miss Fry stayed. The Signora's motives, like those of other people, were mixed. She had the kindest of hearts, especially for the old and ill ; a *stomaco delicato* was a sure passport to her favour, and as she diagnosed poor little Miss Fry's asthma in this rather peculiar fashion, it served as an excuse for many small kindnesses. She did not, however, forget that Miss Fry occupied a tiny north room which would otherwise often be empty, or that she was always ready to write or translate an English letter. Above all, the Signora, like most Italian hotel-keepers, considered an English clientèle a mark of respectability. She liked to have a permanent English guest to welcome new-comers and post them in the doings of the English colony.

The phenomena of exchange stimulated Miss Fry's natural gift for economy, and she became a past mistress in the cheeseparings of her kind. She washed handkerchiefs in her basin, dried them across the window, and ironed them with an electric iron surreptitiously attached to the lamp ; she had breakfast in her room—a Continental habit she detested—in order to save a drop of milk and half a roll for her tea. She bargained over small purchases with a vigour which seemed to belie her gentleness, but which the Italians (though they safeguarded themselves by increasing their prices before they reduced them) respected ; they saw she understood the game.

Miss Fry was a regular Churchwoman and a keen, though platonic, supporter of local charities. The chaplain and other kindly disposed people always included her in the

mild activities of the place. By the time she had lived twenty years in Sant'Anna she was recognised as an integral part of the British community, but also by that time poor little Miss Fry was generally called 'poor old Miss Fry.'

II.

Carola Desmond, tennis racquet in hand, dashed upstairs and knocked at poor old Miss Fry's door.

There was a pause, while Carola stood tapping her racquet impatiently on her foot. When she was given permission to enter she found Miss Fry, whose archaic sense of the seemly had made her cram the undergarment she had been mending behind a cushion, busily knitting a jumper.

'Oh, Miss Fry, I've just been given another ticket for the Variety Entertainment on Thursday evening,' she cried, 'and you simply *must* come !'

Miss Fry's face lighted with childlike pleasure.

'Now that really *is* delightful ! I wanted to go, and thought of taking a ticket, especially as it's for the blind, but I decided that it would not be fair to my nephew to indulge myself.'

'Now, Miss Fry dear, that's really absurd ! I'm sure your nephew would rather you had a whole evening's amusement now, than that he had eighteenpence after you are dead, which won't be for years and years and years !'

'No doubt he would say the same, my dear, but that is not the way to look at it. He must, of course, have all I can leave him. It will not be much, but it would be very remiss of me to indulge myself. If you once begin being selfish it is so hard to leave off. Like coffee after dinner. That ticket might have been the thin end of the wedge.'

Carola seated herself on the bed, remarking :

'I wish you'd drive the wedge in good and deep, Mis-

Fry dear. Nowadays the younger generation doesn't expect to be supported by the older.'

'My nephew supports himself,' Miss Fry replied, a little stiffly. 'He has never asked me for a penny, but his mother was my only sister, and therefore it is natural that he should expect something when I am gone.'

'I don't see why,' insisted Carola. 'You ought to buy an annuity and revel in the fleshpots for the rest of your life. I've a great mind to write to your nephew and tell him so.'

Fleshpots and Miss Fry sounded so incongruous that she burst out laughing.

Miss Fry, though usually tolerant of the girl's plain speaking, now seemed annoyed.

'You will do nothing of the sort, Carola,' she said with great firmness. 'I gave you my nephew's address in case —well, in case anything should happen to me. But I forbid you to use it unless I am seriously ill. Please understand that!'

This was Miss Fry's idea of being very severe, but Carola was not crushed as she should have been, and only answered carelessly :

'Righto, Miss Fry dear ! I'll not write to Mr. Julian Shattock until his legacy's in sight. Then he can come out to the Riviera and spend it in riotous living.'

She thought it too bad of Mr. Shattock to take no notice of his old aunt. Poor old Miss Fry might not be very exciting—who expects that of an aunt?—but she was quite a dear, and a very little attention from him would have pleased her. For all the use he was he might as well have lived in Mars. The only proof that he did not do so was his annual Christmas card, with printed greetings, in a typed envelope with a halfpenny stamp and a London E.C. post-mark. He never troubled to write.

Miss Fry confessed that she did not know much about her nephew. He was in an office, but she was vague about the kind of office. He had been a good baby, she was sure he was a steady young man. The Christmas cards and his photograph as a fat-faced child of three added nothing to this meagre information, and Carola thought that poor lonely old Miss Fry would be better off with no relations at all than with such a nephew.

The chaplain also in vain suggested that Miss Fry should buy an annuity, and the doctor succeeded no better.

'You see, doctor,' explained Miss Fry, who hated not to do what her kind friends wished, 'my nephew might want to marry, or to buy a car, and then, think what a windfall my money would be !'

The doctor, who insisted on attending Miss Fry free of charge (on the plea that she had once had an uncle in medical practice), declared that in future he would charge her double. But instead he took her a basket of tangerines from his garden.

III.

The tickets for the Variety Entertainment were never used. On Thursday afternoon Signora Scarelli, alarmed but pleasurable important, summoned Dr. Field and Carola. The doctor, with a serious face, told Carola that she had better write to her old friend's relatives.

Carola, unhappily remembering her jest of a few days earlier, sent a lengthy telegram to Mr. Julian Shattock. His reply, '*Spare no expense. Keep me informed.*' atoned for some of his past negligence, and his second wire, giving date and time of arrival at Sant'Anna, for more.

Signora Scarelli's satisfaction was intense. A male relative was almost as great an asset as a delicate stomach, and Miss

Fry, with pneumonia and nephew, had an importance which in good health and alone she would never have attained.

Mr. Shattock arrived, most providentially, as the guests were filing through the hall to the *salle à manger*. They could all see and even hear him, and were able to discuss him throughout dinner, which made a delightful break in the monotony of the dull little *pension*. For he was utterly unlike what anyone had expected.

If the fat-faced infant of the photograph had turned into a weedy young man in shabby clothes, no one would have been surprised. But Mr. Shattock was not young, weedy, or shabby. He was a tall, broad-shouldered man in early middle age, with extremely good clothes and expensive-looking luggage. The Signora was quite scandalised at the sum she heard the driver ask, but noted with satisfaction that it was paid without comment. She hurried forward to greet him, and in a mixture of villainous Italian-French and sketchy English told him that the doctor's last bulletin was satisfactory. As she took him upstairs the guests heard his big voice booming, 'Good ! Good ! Poor old dear ! *Merci, madame, merci !*'

Poor old Miss Fry did not provide the further sensation of a funeral. The sentimentally inclined said that she 'took a turn' from the moment her nephew arrived. Others gave the credit, according to their personal likings, to the doctor, the trained nurse, or Carola. All three battled devotedly for the frail life. Mr. Shattock begged them to spend as much money as possible, and showered fruit, flowers, and indiarubber cushions on the sick-room. He had been horrified at its shabbiness and sunless aspect, and badgered the doctor to move her into the Signora's best room. When at last this was done he gave a tea-

party at the Casino to all the Scarelli guests in honour of the event. He would have liked it to be a dinner-party, but when Carola declared that this would hurt the Signora's feelings, gave up the idea. It was just as well, for few of the guests ever went out at night, and most were on diets. The festivity might easily have provided Dr. Field with a batch of patients.

When she first saw her nephew Miss Fry had been too ill to realise how different he was from what she had expected. This dawned on her as she recovered, and she confessed ruefully that she must have forgotten the passing years. She was a little frightened of him, and sometimes looked at him in a puzzled way, as if wondering if he were an impostor.

'He seems to be *rich*!' she said one day in an awed tone to Carola. She had never known anyone rich, or at least no one who spent money as if it did not matter.

'Of course he's rich!' replied Carola. 'He's so rich, and has been rich so long, that he's forgotten what it is to be anything else. If he ever knew. Oh, lucky, lucky man!'

'He tells me he's a widower with two children,' added Miss Fry rather doubtfully, as though so extravagant a statement could not be swallowed without investigation.

'Yes. Isn't it providential? I mean, that he's a widower,' remarked Carola.

Miss Fry looked at her in surprise, and with rather a shocked expression. She was, in fact, often shocked by the way modern girls, even Carola, spoke of their dealings with men. According to her old-fashioned ideas, there was nothing very terrible in angling for husbands, but the process should not be discussed. Carola laughed when she saw her old friend's disapproval.

'Oh, you wicked old thing ! You don't suppose I meant that I wanted to catch him, do you ?'

This was exactly what Miss Fry had meant, but she hastily disclaimed it, and Carola explained :

'No, I'm not out to be your niece-in-law, Miss Fry dear. What a pity I'm not a designing young woman ! But it's really providential that Mrs. Julian popped off a few years ago. He wants to take you back to England and give you a rattling good time. That is, let you look after his quite decent kids and his palatial house. The kids have a nurse and the house has a housekeeper, so all you'll have to do will be to look ornamental ! Oh, Miss Fry, to think you might have had coffee after dinner all these years !'

Miss Fry shook her head.

'Julian may not need my money now, but remember he has two children ! I must think of the future.'

Carola stamped her foot with impatience.

'Miss Fry, you really are incorrigible !' she exclaimed.

IV.

Julian Shattock did not quite deserve Carola Desmond's strictures. He had not seen his aunt for nearly forty years, and had not the faintest recollection of ever having done so. His widowed mother, the only link with her, had died soon after he had been photographed in his first trouser suit, and he had been adopted by paternal relatives. The annual Christmas card was a habit retained since childhood, and his aunt's letters did not seem to require an answer ; he had always meant to reply, but never did.

'You might at least have told her of your marriage !' cried Carola indignantly.

Shattock had been looking as guilty as only a kind-hearted man accused of unkindness can look, but now he clutched at a chance to defend himself.

'But I did ! I met my wife in South America, and wrote to Aunt Susan before our marriage. In Rio. She never answered. I supposed she wasn't interested, and never wrote again. Ought to have, when the kids came, I suppose.'

'Well, we won't say anything more about it,' Carola conceded magnanimously. 'You'll have to make up by being decent to her now. As you have been since you knew how ill she was,' she added graciously.

Mr. Shattock asked nothing better. He had been shocked to find his aunt in what seemed to him little better than penury. He thought the 'Pension Scarelli' a ghastly poky hole, full of nice, kind, but rather dull and depressingly hard-up people, and suggested that, until she was able to travel to England, she should enjoy the luxury of the 'Hotel Majestic.' Miss Fry looked positively frightened.

'Oh no, Julian, I couldn't possibly ! Of course it's very kind of you, dear, but I am much happier with Signora Scarelli, and she would be dreadfully hurt ! Please !'

He hastened to assure her that she need go nowhere except where she wished. After all, he pondered, Aunt Susan herself was nice, kind, and rather dull. It was natural she should be happy at 'Pension Scarelli,' and at least she need no longer be hard up. He stayed in Sant'Anna a month, and then, recalled by telegram after telegram, rushed back to England by air.

A few weeks later, Miss Fry, with a nurse engaged for the journey and with Carola, who was returning to work, waved a tearful farewell to the 'Pension Scarelli.' Huge and most inconvenient bundles of carnations were thrust

into the taxi by old Papà Scarelli, Paolina the cook, and Maddalena the washerwoman ; Signora Scarelli sobbed so loudly that the youngest Scarelli, until then cheerfully excited over the bustle of departure, did the same, only even more noisily. The English visitors, with national restraint, fluttered handkerchiefs and called good wishes.

Miss Fry had never before soared above second class on continental railway journeys, and had sometimes sunk to third. This time, with her *salon-lit*, her nurse, her dear Carola, and the well-tipped servitude of train attendants, she felt as though she were setting off on a magic carpet. In spite, however, of all the comfort that money could procure, it was a very white and tired little Miss Fry who was almost lifted out of the train at Victoria.

Julian Shattock, well groomed, hearty, efficient, porters behind him, his car waiting, was on the platform to meet them. As Miss Fry took his strong arm, she murmured to Carola :

'I feel as if I were Royalty !'

V.

Miss Fry did not like being called 'madam.' Of course she knew that Julian's super-solemn butler and super-refined housekeeper could not be expected to call her 'Signorina,' but in her long-ago experience of English servants (certainly they were more often charwomen and generals than butlers and housekeepers) she had been called 'miss.' She would not have minded 'ma'am' as a tribute to her years, but at Mitton Bois even the most insignificant kitchen-maid called her 'madam.' It was the same in shops, at the post-office and at the bank. She was not sure whether it were a change of fashion or a sign of her impor-

tance, but she found it impossible to take a personal interest in those who called her 'madam,' and Miss Fry liked to take an interest in everybody.

Life at Harlands House was in every way different from life at 'Pension Scarelli.' It was, as Miss Fry often told herself, immeasurably superior. Not only was everything beautifully arranged, but there was none of that uncertainty which had so often irritated English visitors at the 'Scarelli.' At the same hour every morning, after a discreet knock at the door, Warrack—Miss Fry thought it almost as unpleasant to call a woman by her surname as to be called 'madam' by her—slipped into the room, placed what was called 'Madam's early cup' on a small table by her bed, noiselessly pulled up the blinds, and silently withdrew. Had Miss Fry, peeping through her closed lashes, not seen Warrack's solid form she might have supposed all to have been done by magic. At 'Pension Scarelli' no such illusion was possible. At an hour which varied according to many irrelevant causes, Teresa thumped at the door, burst into the room, banged a jug of hot water down on the washstand, and started conversation. After she had flung open the shutters, this was stimulated by the weather. If fine, she would exclaim, 'Che bellezza!' and in wind or rain would foretell disaster to the olives. Before she left the room, Miss Fry had heard her pungent comments on all the gossip that had been discussed in the kitchen the day before.

Everything at Harlands was orderly where at the *pension* it had been, if not disorderly, at least erratic; the English servants were quiet and well trained, the Italians had been noisy and not trained at all; at Harlands felted doors shut off every sound from the kitchen and nursery quarters, but at Sant'Anna the doors leading to domestic offices were

nearly always open, and the din of laughter and shouting, as well as culinary odours, penetrated to the whole house.

Robert and Edna Shattock were certainly not always silent and well behaved, but their noise and misdeeds were carefully kept from their great-aunt. Poor old Aunt Susan did her best to make friends. They liked her well enough, but preferred their nurse and daily governess.

Julian Shattock was a very busy man. From Monday to Saturday his aunt hardly saw him, but he was genuinely glad to have her at Harlands, and liked to discuss his children with her. He told her this was her home for the rest of her life, but found it impossible to make her understand that she could act, and spend money, without reference to him. When he opened a bank account for her and gave her a cheque book she looked bewildered, and only occasionally drew cheques for a few shillings.

The arrival of an aunt at Harlands House was a mild excitement for the neighbourhood. Mothers wondered if she could be used to secure the wealthy but meteoric Mr. Shattock for a son-in-law, garden-lovers planned to reform her garden, and everybody wondered which side she would take in a great parochial schism. It was disappointing when she proved only what might have been expected from a maiden aunt imported from a little place on the Italian Riviera. She was too shy to give match-making opportunities ; knew so little of gardening that she expected Surrey, like the Riviera, to produce two or three crops of roses a year ; and worst of all, though a regular attendant at the parish church, she neither demanded incense nor snorted at Anglo-Catholicism. After curiosity had been satisfied, poor old Miss Fry had few visitors or invitations. She had done little to encourage them, but found it dull when they failed.

She thought with longing of Sant'Anna. How full her days had been there ! How empty they were here ! At Sant'Anna she had 'helped' at the English Library once a week, and nearly every day had pottered in to change a book, and to chat (usually in the reading-room) to other subscribers. At Harlands books arrived regularly from *The Times* Book Club and Julian received so many papers and magazines that there was no need to go elsewhere to read them. At Sant'Anna she stopped and talked to peasants and villagers, discussing the two topics which interested them, crops and visitors. Here she felt everyone aloof and herself a stranger. She was too diffident to offer her services for parochial work, and indeed would have been of little use.

Her nephew asked her one day if she would like to ask Carola Desmond down.

'Oh, may I ?' she asked with sparkling eyes.

'May you ? How absurd ! Of course you may ! If you don't think she'll find it dull.'

'I'm sure she'd love it,' Miss Fry said with enthusiasm, and Carola came for a long week-end. Miss Fry took her driving, Julian played tennis with her, and the children showed her their house in a tree. She declared with obvious sincerity that everything was simply gorgeous, and after that came down from time to time. She dropped hats and gloves all over the place, banged doors or left them open, and brought the kitchen dog into the drawing-room. She lost her fountain-pen, and made all the servants, regardless of rank, hunt for it. Miss Fry began to lose her awe of Manders after she had seen him flat on the floor poking a stick under a chest, and Warrack became human when, with a crow of triumph, she produced the pen from behind a sofa cushion.

Miss Fry had lived in rather lonely grandeur at Harlands

House for about a year when Carola, arriving on one of her flying visits, remarked that she was shortly going to spend a few weeks with her mother at Sant' Anna. Her hostess nearly dropped the teapot in her excitement. Her eyes shone with altruistic joy.

'Oh, how lovely ! I do envy you ! Please go down to the *pension* as soon as possible, and write and tell me all about it ! Will you take out some presents for me ? I think the Signora would like . . . '

She grew very animated in discussing gifts for the Scarelli family, drew quite a large cheque, and they both enjoyed themselves greatly in making the purchases.

'I'll send you a card the minute I get there, and a letter next day !' Carola promised her.

When, however, a few days later Carola was on the platform at Victoria, she was astounded to see her old friend, followed by a porter with a suitcase and rug, peering into the carriages of the boat-train.

'Miss Fry ! Aunt Susan ! Where did you spring from ? Where are you going ?' she called to her.

Miss Fry gave a little cry of relief. Her hat was crooked, and her cheeks were flushed.

'Oh, there you are ! I was terrified lest I had made a mistake ! I am going to Sant'Anna with you ! Isn't it lovely ! I *am* so happy !'

'What a splendid idea ! But, Miss Fry dear, I'm afraid we can't travel together. I am going third, and Mr. Shattock would never approve of that. I suppose you have a first-class ticket ?'

Miss Fry shook her head, and looked rather mysterious. Then she said :

'No, I have two second-class tickets. Here they are !' She produced them triumphantly. 'One for you and one

for me. And I told the man to book seats right through, with first-class accommodation on the boat. Let us get in at once.'

Usually it was Carola who took the lead in their queer companionship, but now it was Miss Fry who arranged the luggage, bought papers and ordered tea. She seemed in a fever to be off, and only calmed down as the train steamed out of the station. At Calais, the perils of the deep and the *douane* safely past, she said to Carola :

'Would you mind sending a wire to Signora Scarelli, dear ? I left so suddenly that I forgot to do so.'

'Mr. Shattock won't have forgotten,' replied Carola, though she wondered that he had let his aunt travel anything but first-class, and thought he might have come to see her off. Again she found she had misjudged him, for Miss Fry calmly remarked :

'Julian doesn't know I've come.'

Carola gasped.

'Sakes alive, Aunt Susan ! Do you mean to say you've run away ?'

'No, of course not. That is, of course I'm going back. But the children are with their grandmother, and Julian is in Germany on business. I thought of you seeing the Via Dante, and the Fontana, and the Mediterranean, and the olives . . . and . . . and . . . lots of things. I simply couldn't bear it. I had to come.'

Carola patted her hand.

'All right, Miss Fry dear ! It will be splendid having you. It's a grand idea. I'm sure Mr. Shattock will be pleased. I suppose you've written to him ?'

Poor old Miss Fry looked guilty.

'Well, no. I don't want Julian to think I'm not happy at Harlands—of course I am, very happy !—so I thought

I'd only stay a few days and return before he is back from Germany. I told the servants I was going up to town, and hoped to be back in a week. It is true. It's nothing to do with them where I go in the week.'

'Well, I'm damned!' exclaimed Carola with masculine vigour. 'You *are* a wily old bird! But I'm sure Mr. Shattock would not like you to take this long journey twice in a week. You must at least wait to travel back with me. I'll write and tell him I persuaded you to come.'

'Oh, but that would not be true,' objected Miss Fry, whose Puritan conscience objected to a lie, though it did not mind a little deceit. 'Besides, I don't want to put the responsibility on you.'

'Bless you, I don't mind telling a lie, nor yet taking a spot of responsibility,' declared Carola robustly.

An enthusiastic welcome awaited Miss Fry. The Signora, Papà Scarelli and a selection of children were at the station with large bundles of carnations. The rest of the family and the staff were on the steps of the house, and she was obliged to submit to many embraces which revealed the fact that the national love of garlic still persisted. At dinner that evening Asti spumante was served to everybody, and though it is not champagne or even very like it, most of the guests, including Miss Fry, could not have told the difference.

VI.

Carola Desmond did not show Miss Fry her letter to Julian Shattock. The first result was a telegram to his aunt which only said, 'Good idea. Don't hurry. Love, Julian,' but which soothed her rather guilty conscience. Two letters followed.

To his aunt Julian wrote :

'Carola says the climate at Sant'Anna suits you better than any other. Why not make it your head-quarters? At the *pension*, if you like, or I would buy you a small house. Come to Harlands for the hot summer weather, and as often as you like at other times. There will always be a welcome for you. The children will miss you, but when they are a little older I will bring them out to see you at Sant'Anna. *They* shall not be allowed to forget their Aunt Susan.'

Poor old Miss Fry cried with joy, and felt she had treated Julian very badly. She began to make plans for the children's visit.

The letter to Carola was no less a matter for thought.

'You are a brutal young woman, but right as usual. You can't transplant an old tree. If the dear old thing is happy in her fusty *pension* she shall stay there. Please see that she has its best. . . .

'Does this mean you won't come down to Harlands any more? I should hate that. Something must be done about it. You will please lunch with me as soon as you are back, and we can discuss this matter.'

'Ho, ho!' thought Carola. 'That might almost be called Premonitory symptoms, what? Now, am I a designing young woman, or am I not?'

Not only the Scarelli family and their ramifying connections welcomed poor old Miss Fry back to Sant'Anna. The British colony, pleased that the dynamic nephew who had carried her off had allowed her to return, showered her with attentions. It was soon known that, although she insisted on living at the funny little 'Pension Scarelli,' she might have been at the 'Majestic'; and since human nature, even in kindly people, has its persistent weaknesses, she was now treated with deference instead of condescension. It would certainly have been absurd to speak with com-

passion of an old lady whose afternoon tea was taken up to her private sitting-room, and who had coffee served after both lunch and dinner, so she was generally mentioned as 'dear old Miss Fry.'

Carola tried in vain to wean her from economical habits. By Mr. Shattock's orders his aunt had everything the 'Pension Scarelli' could provide, but she still found ways to save money. She continued to wash handkerchiefs in her basin, and to carry off oranges from table ; nothing would induce her to drive—if she could not go to church or library on foot she would not go at all. Although she took tickets for entertainments, they were never the best.

'She's happier like that,' Carola declared when she met Julian Shattock in town ; 'she's saved money all her life, and can't leave off. Spending's dull by comparison.'

He shook his head in a puzzled way. Such an idea was beyond his comprehension.

'Money is made to be spent,' he said ; 'but I didn't ask you here to talk about money, or even about Aunt Susan. . . . Carola . . . '

When her nephew's exultant telegram arrived Miss Fry was filled with pleasurable and rather sentimental excitement. She decided that she must at once alter her will in favour of Carola's children. Robert and Edna would, after all, have plenty. She wondered if she ought to give up her coffee, but was relieved to remember that Signora Scarelli, under orders from Julian, would not allow this. However, it would be easy to knock something off her weekly washing bill. Maddalena washed well, but her charges were preposterous. The light of battle gleamed in her eye as she prepared herself for next Monday's argument.

Bordighera.

TO A SEAGULL SEEN FAR INLAND.

*Wherefore hast thou, O white crisp-cleaving bird,
Forsaken the torn fringes of the tide ?
Why is thy harsh lament no longer heard
Where hour by hour the sea-smooth'd shingles slide,
But rather, fretful, o'er this midland plain,
Across the meadows and the berried hedge,
Above the shadows of the tented grain,
Beside the fir-copse and beyond the sedge ?*

*Art thou some banished exile cast adrift
From out the bosom of thy natural kind,
Condemned to wander lonely till thy shrift
Be granted and thee dispensation find ?
Or art thou named a legate of the sea
That bring'st his benediction to the land,
This land where breezes ripple constantly
To mould the grasses as he moulds the sand ?*

*O bird, whatever be thy mission here,
Thou canst not but proclaim a native air !
I think thy polished flight is not more clear
Than the wild memories which thy wild wings bear,
Aye, bear and bring to me from my own youth
Whenas I tarried watchful by the shore,
And mixed me with thy kind in very truth,
And shared their solitude and learned their lore.*

*For we were guests together of one host,
Rapt in the large embraces of the wind.
And we were free together of one coast,
And used our freedom with an equal mind !
Go, take thy passage down the shining sky
To thy companions stretched along the main.
Thou canst return, O wanderer, but I
Shall never tread my boyhood's path again.*

K. C. BAXTER.

BECAUSE THE BLACKTHORN BLOOMS.

*The blackthorn splashes foam along the edges
Of field and wood : the sloe beside the stream
Is starry : high above the walls and hedges
Wild cherry lightly lifts its risen cream.*

*A bobolink among the scarlet poppies
Tinkles his silver bells . . . O, world betrayed—
Distraught—despairing. . In this tranquil coppice
Green-cloistered, almost could the spring persuade
My heart, the while I drink from beauty's chalice,
To doubt that earth is rent by lust of power,
By hate and fear. There is no wrath or malice,
There is no hate, on this enchanted hour,
Because the blackthorn blooms in English valleys,
Because on English hills wild cherries flower !*

M. SINTON LEITCH.

Virginia.

VOL. 155.—NO. 927.

BY HENRY M. GREY.

CORNHILL is one of the oldest of London's streets—probably as old as Londinium itself. In the days of the Britons there was a forest path, or trackway, running east and west, which was the ancestor of Cannon Street and Ludgate Hill or Queen Victoria Street. When the Romans, on their second coming, extended the trading settlement they had found on Thames-side they built a wall around it, pierced by some half a dozen gates. The road from Camelodunum across the Essex marshes entered the town at Aldgate, and through the Newgate passed Watling Street, the great highway which led to Verulamium and the north. The Romans usually made their roads in a direct line from point to point, and the shortest cut between these two gates was along what are now Leadenhall Street, Cornhill and Cheapside. No map has come down to us to show the plan of Londinium 1,600 years ago, but excavations from time to time have unearthed fragments of pavements and remains of buildings along this line of route, and it is fair to assume that a thoroughfare followed that course.

It was not, however, until Saxon times that Cornhill received the name it still bears to-day. Chronicles of the City show that, originally, the Wards were the 'sokes,' or estates, of private persons, the Ward of Farringdon, for example, being named after Nicholas and Edward Faryngdon, the donors, who were *ealdormen*, or eminent City Fathers, in their day. Some writers have inferred from this that Cornhill derived its name from the original owner, as, in an old

document dated 1125, one Edward Upcornhill is mentioned, with several other 'Brothers of a Knighten Guild,' as conveying a 'soke' to the church. This estate thus became the soke of the Bishop of London, who appears to have delegated the management of it to a bailiff.

It would seem to be just as likely that the owner took his name from the estate, as certain Scottish chieftains and others have been known to do. In any case, the words 'corne' and 'hyll' are Anglo-Saxon, and bore the same meaning as they do to-day. Passingham¹ says that the earliest corn markets were at Cornhill and St. Michael-le-Quern (western end of Cheapside), and Stow² mentions that on Cornhill a produce market was 'time out of mind there holden.' And what more likely, seeing that where Leadenhall Market stands to-day the Forum was in Roman times, and, though the market is in the Ward of Lime Street, Stow speaks of it as 'upon Cornhill'?

But whatever the ancient market was, and wherever exactly it was held, it does not appear to have been confined to produce alone. Dealers in old clothes, known as 'frippers,' or 'fripperers,' were at a very early date in the habit of resorting thither, and the place seems to have acquired a certain notoriety very similar to that earned by our own Petticoat Lane of a later time. Lydgate, the monk of Bury St. Edmunds and disciple of Chaucer, loved pottering about London, and has left on record what happened to him on the occasion of his visit to this rag fair :

' Then into Corn Hyl anon I yode,
Where was much stolen gere amone
I saw where honge myne owne hoode,
That I had lost among the thronge ;

¹ London Markets.

² Survey of London.

*To buy my owne hoode I thought it wronge,
I knew it well as I dyd my crede,
But for lack of money I could not speede.¹*

So long ago as Edward the First's time the moral behaviour of the citizens would seem to have given concern to the authorities, for in 1282 Henry de Walles, the then Mayor of London, caused a prison to be built on Cornhill 'for night-walkers and other suspicious persons.' It was erected at the corner of Birch Lane, and became known as the Tun 'because the same was built somewhat in fashion of a Tun standing on the one end.' According to Stow, 'to this prison the night watches of this city committed not only night-walkers, but also other persons, as well spiritual as temporal, whom they suspected of incontinence, and punished them according to the customs of this city.' It so happened that in 1297 several priests were found guilty of offences against the moral code, and imprisoned in the Tun accordingly. The Bishop of London was shocked—less, apparently, at the fact of their immoralities than that clerical offenders should receive punishment at the hands of the laity. He accordingly protested to King Edward, pointing out to the monarch that by The Great Charter of England the Church had a privilege that 'no clerk should be imprisoned by a layman without our commandment and breach of peace.' A Proclamation was thereupon issued, and ordered to be read in full hustings, that 'no watch hereafter enter into any clerk's chamber under the forfeit of twenty pounds. Dated at Carlisle the 18th of March the 25th of our Reign.'

Herein, moreover, was a potential source of revenue to the Church's coffers which was not lightly to be neglected, for the punishment of delinquent priests at the hands of

¹ Poem : 'London Lyckpenny.'

their superiors took the form of fines, and judging by the records of those times the opportunities of inflicting these monetary penalties were neither few nor far between. Indeed, a century later, in the reign of Richard II, we find the citizens of London protesting that they 'abhorred not only the negligence of their prelates, but also their avarice that studied for money, omitted the punishment limited by law, and permitted those that were found guilty to live favourably in their sin.'

Horrified at this mercenary method of dealing with priests found guilty of offences against public morality, the citizens of London decided to take upon themselves the rights claimed by the bishops, and in spite of King Edward's proclamation determined to 'purge their city from such filthiness lest, through God's vengeance, either the pestilence or sword should happen to them, or that the earth should swallow them.'

An example of the lay method of dealing with such matters is given by Stow, the affair having occurred in his own lifetime. A certain John Atwod, a draper dwelling in the parish of St. Michael's, Cornhill, 'having a proper woman to his wife,' was in the habit of entertaining 'a lusty chantry priest' of the said parish church to supper and a friendly game at 'tables' for a pint of ale. On one occasion the game was interrupted by Atwod having to go into the shop to attend to some pressing business. He was detained for some time, and the priest took advantage of the worthy draper's absence to behave improperly towards his wife. The husband returning suddenly 'found such play to his misliking that he forced the priest to leap out at the window, and so to run to his lodging in the churchyard.' Atwod attributed no blame in this matter to his wife, she being 'one as seemed the holiest among a thousand,' but

the priest was, in consequence, apprehended and committed to the Tun. The punishment awarded him was that on three market days he was conveyed through the streets of the city, with a paper on his head whereon was written his ‘trespass.’ On the first day he rode in some sort of conveyance ; on the second on horseback, with his face to the animal’s tail ; and on the third day he was marched between two men, a recital of his misdeeds being made each day at every street corner, in front of Atwod’s house, and at the church door. Furthermore, he was deprived of his chantry, which was of the value of twenty nobles a year, and banished from the City for ever. One can hardly imagine that he would wish to remain in a place which had such unhappy memories for him !

This public parade of wrong-doers seems to have been a favoured form of punishment in olden days, as witness the stocks, the pillory, etc. In the fourteenth century a City ordinance was passed that women guilty of certain offences should first be imprisoned in the Tun, and afterwards have their heads shaved after the manner of thieves, and then led about the City ‘with trumpets and pipes that their persons might be more largely known.’

To the west of the Tun prison was a well of spring water, but in the year 1401 this well was boarded over, and the Tun was converted into a cistern, the water being conveyed from the Tybourne in leaden pipes, and thereafter known as the Conduit upon Cornhill. Over the old well a new prison was built, strongly made of timber, with a pair of stocks as a necessary adjunct. On the top of this prison, or cage, as it was called, a pillory was erected ‘for the punishment of bakers offending in the assize of bread, for millers stealing of corn at the mill, for bawds, scolds, and other offenders.’

An offence which was not uncommon in those days, but

for which there is little or no scope nowadays, was known as 'false inquest.' The *modus operandi* was as follows : a man would endeavour to get himself warned for jury service on *nisi prius* cases, and, if not summoned, would hang about the court in the hope of being called from among those standing around to fill the place of an absent juryman. He would then try to get himself chosen as foreman, and do his best to induce the others to agree to the verdict he himself decided upon, which depended upon the reward he had been promised by either the plaintiff or the defendant. Several persons were convicted of this offence during the reign of Edward IV, and in the time of Henry VIII, three men, who were described as ringleaders, were condemned to ride about the City with their faces to the horse's tail, to be set in the pillory in Cornhill and afterwards at Newgate, where, the chronicler relates, 'they died for very shame.'¹ It is easier to believe that they died from the effects of the missiles thrown at them in the course of their journeyings through the City streets, as one would not associate a tender conscience with men who were capable of committing so mean a crime.

Most of the amenities of Cornhill were provided by private persons, and not at the City's expense, for a Mayor of London on two occasions paid the cost of enlarging, or otherwise improving, the Conduit. Then, too, Sir Thomas Lowell, a freeman of the City, and a member of the Grocers' Company, had a house on the north side of Cornhill which was called the Weigh House, as a 'king's beam' was installed there. To this beam merchandise of all sorts was brought from the merchants' establishments to be weighed, and the owner made a present of this house with all its appurtenances to the Grocers' Company.

¹ Fabyan's *Chronicle of England*.

Another erection of more enduring memory than the Weigh House was set up in 1582 by a man named Peter Moris, or Morris, called by Stow in one place a Dutchman, and in another a German. This was a Water Standard, which stood at the four cross-roads where Bishopsgate, Leadenhall, and Gracechurch streets meet Cornhill, and to which water from the Thames was conveyed in leaden pipes. In the course of time the Standard disappeared, but a pump stood at this spot for many years, and there are still in existence milestones outside London which record on their faces the distance from the 'Standard in Cornhill.'

In like manner, even the Royal Exchange itself, the pride of Cornhill, owes its existence to private benefaction. The project of a 'goodely Bursse' was first mooted by Sir Richard Gresham, Lord Mayor in 1538, and laid before Thomas Cromwell, the Lord Privy Seal. The idea was rejected, to be taken up a generation later by his younger son. The name of Sir Thomas Gresham will always be associated with the Royal Exchange, but, while giving all due honour to this worthy citizen, the name of Richard Clough should also be remembered in this connection. Clough was Sir Thomas's agent in the city of Antwerp, and there the merchants and others engaged in commerce had long been accustomed to meet and transact their business in a Bourse worthy of the proud eminence the city on the Schelde at that time occupied. He knew, too, the conditions obtaining in London, where business men were compelled to go to one another's houses, or meet in some open-air market to discuss their affairs—for there were, as yet, not even coffee-houses to which to resort. In December, 1561, Clough wrote to his principal expressing his views on the subject, deeming it shame that so important a city as London should lag so far behind, and pressing Sir Thomas

to put into execution the design his father had had in mind.

Thus spurred, Sir Thomas approached the City Fathers and offered to build an Exchange at his own cost if a suitable site were given him. On the site finally selected there were no fewer than eighty houses standing, but the whole lot were purchased by the citizens of London at a cost of little more than £3,500. The houses were then sold for £478 to such persons as undertook to demolish them and remove the debris, and the ground was then cleared at the City's expense. The plot of land was thereupon handed over to Sir Thomas Gresham by certain aldermen in the name of the whole citizens, and on June 7, 1566, the first foundation-stone—which, by the way, was a brick—was laid by Sir Thomas. The building was erected from the designs of a Flemish architect, and closely resembled the Bourse at Antwerp, both Flemish workmen and materials being employed in its construction. It was completed before the end of the following year, but it was not until January 23, 1570, that Queen Elizabeth came from Somerset House to the City to open it. Her Majesty first of all dined with Sir Thomas at his house in Bishopsgate Street, whence she proceeded, via Cornhill, to the southern entrance of the Bourse, and having thoroughly inspected every part of the building caused the same ‘by an herald and trumpet to be proclaimed the Royal Exchange, and so to be called from thenceforth, and not otherwise.’

The building of the Exchange is stated to have cost the sum of £6,000, or thereabouts, and Sir Thomas had ‘most frankly and lovingly’ promised that within a month after the Bourse should be fully finished he would present it in equal moieties to the City and the Mercers’ Company, of which Guild he had been a member for more than twenty

years. The shrewd merchant-prince had a reputation in some quarters of not being pedantically scrupulous in all his business transactions, and in this case, apparently, his promise was not carried out. He died in 1579, and by his will bequeathed—*inter alia*—to his widow the rents, etc., derived from the shops in the Royal Exchange, which were said to amount to some £750 per annum. After her death the building was to go to the City and the Mercers' Company in equal shares. Meanwhile, the revenue he must have derived from the property was not a bad return for the outlay expended, or as Malcolm, in his *Londinium Redivivum*, puts it, 'was a coalition of public utility and private advantage not often equalled.'

Cornhill has been unusually unfortunate in the matter of fires. There was, of course, the Great Fire of 1666 which swept the street from end to end, and laid Gresham's Exchange in ruins. In 1748 a fire broke out in the house of a man named Eldridge, a peruke-maker in Exchange Alley, in which not only Eldridge and his whole family, but a number of other people perished in the flames. Altogether, on that occasion, nearly a hundred houses were destroyed by fire, including the London Assurance office, Tom's and the Rainbow coffee-houses in Cornhill; Garraway's, Jonathan's, and the Jerusalem coffee-houses in Exchange Alley, the George and Vulture and several other taverns and coffee-houses. In 1760 thirteen houses were burnt, and many more damaged, by a fire which originated in Hamlin's coffee-house in Sweeting's Alley. The church of St. Benet Finke was damaged by fire and water, and the Royal Exchange narrowly escaped. Five years later all the houses from Cornhill to St. Martin Outwich Church, including the White Lion Tavern which had been purchased the evening before for £3,000, and several houses in Leadenhall

Street were burnt, and several lives lost. Curiously enough, this fire also originated on the premises of a peruke-maker, in Bishopsgate Street.

The year after the Great Fire the rebuilding of the Royal Exchange was taken in hand. Charles II laid the foundation-stone, and opened the new edifice on September 28, 1669. The cost—£58,962—was defrayed in equal shares by the City and the Mercers' Company. But again fire was to be the cause of its destruction, during a very severe frost on the night of January 10, 1838. All efforts to save the building were unavailing, the frost being so keen that the water from the fire-engines is stated to have frozen in mid-air. The bells in the clock tower had clanged out at midnight for the last time the ill-omened tune, 'There's nae luck about the house.' Before 3 a.m., when the next chimes were due, the tower had fallen with a crash into the flames below.

Nothing daunted, the Mercers' Company, who were then, as now, the owners of the building, set about the work of replacing it. More buildings were purchased east and north of the old structure, and on January 17, 1842, the foundation-stone of a new Royal Exchange was laid by the Lord Mayor, Sir John Pirie. It bore the inscription :

May God our Preserver
Ward off Destruction
From this building
And from the whole City,

and the new building was formally opened by Queen Victoria on October 28, 1844. The total cost of the increased space and the new edifice amounted to £370,000.

It is difficult to picture Cornhill as the scene of a battle, yet one actually took place there. In 1645, after the crushing defeat at Naseby, certain disbanded royalist regiments marched on London, and endeavoured to reawaken enthusi-

asm for the Royal cause. Cromwell sent General Fairfax to quell the rising, and the opposing forces met near Leadenhall Street, Fairfax being victorious. For this service Fairfax demanded from the City the sum of £50,000 for his master. The City refused, and the Cromwellian soldiers thereupon proceeded to dismantle the fortifications. Ultimately Cromwell succeeded in squeezing £20,000 out of the citizens, but when, some little time after, he was setting out on his Irish expedition he demanded from the City of London no less than £150,000 towards his expenses. The good citizens may well have thought that it was a case of Rehoboam over again.

The two churches on Cornhill which still remain, St. Peter's and St. Michael's, are on the south side of the street, and both are of very ancient foundation. St. Peter's, indeed, claims to have been founded by Lucius, 'the first king in Britain,' four hundred years before the landing of St. Augustine on these shores. There is a tablet to that effect in the church itself, but the claim is not seriously regarded by historians, the existence of Lucius himself being merely legendary. St. Michael's, on the other hand, is known to have been founded in the year 1133, and its tower, which is in imitation of the chapel tower of Magdalen College, Oxford, forms a very conspicuous city landmark at the present day. Within the church rest the remains of Robert Fabyan, the chronicler, alderman of London, and sheriff in 1493.

It was in St. Michael's Alley that the first coffee-house in London was established. This was known as Pasqua's, and later Bowman's, which first made its appearance in the year 1652, and in course of time a number of these establishments sprang up all about the neighbourhood of Cornhill.¹ The

¹ 'Old London Coffee-houses' formed the subject of an article which appeared in the October number of this magazine.

Sultaness coffee-house in Sweeting's Rents ; Garraway's, the favourite resort of Jonathan Swift, Baker's and Jonathan's all in Exchange Alley ; John's, first in Birch Lane and later in Cornhill, frequented by Garrick and Chatterton, and where the London Chess Club was first formed ; the Jamaica, Jerusalem, and many others, all achieved a celebrity of one sort or another. Perhaps the popularity of these places reached the peak in the days of the South Sea Bubble, when all ranks of men and women—duchesses and chambermaids, Court physicians and crossing-sweepers, merchant princes and parasites, crooks and their dupes—thronged Exchange Alley in the wild hope of becoming rich in a day. As Swift put it :

*'There is a gulf where thousands fell,
Here all the bold adventurers came ;
A narrow sound, though deep as Hell,
'Change Alley is the dreadful name.'*

*Meanwhile secure on Garraway's cliffs,
A savage race, by shipwrecks fed,
Lie waiting for the founder'd skiffs,
And strip the bodies of the dead.'*

The South Sea Company itself was a genuine concern. It was the very success of it which brought out so many would-be emulators, and led to an orgy of speculation the like of which has never been seen in this country, either before or since. It had been founded in 1711 by Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford, to take over England's floating debt of £10,000,000, the Company being granted in return a monopoly of British trade with South America and the Pacific Islands. In the boom year of 1720, when the Company's shares went soaring up on the conclusion of another favourable deal with the Government of the day, all sorts

of 'wild-cat' schemes were launched in and around Exchange Alley, and found gullible supporters. A company to turn quicksilver into malleable metal; another to make deal boards out of sawdust; another to provide £100 a year for life in return for £5 paid to the promoter 'as soon as a sufficient number had subscribed'—these, and scores of others, found eager subscribers among a public that had gone for the time being crazy. Nothing was too ridiculous or absurd, and thousands of pounds changed hands every day.

But out of all this welter of madcap schemes that were then evolved two companies were born in those fevered times which are with us to-day, known as the Royal Exchange and London Assurance Corporations. They were the first to break the monopoly of Lloyd's, Charters being granted to them by Parliament. The long association of these two Companies with Cornhill—extending in the case of the Royal Exchange over more than two centuries—and Lloyd's itself of a century and a half, may be said to have made this famous thoroughfare the centre of the insurance world.

Exchange Alley was, for a century and more, the centre of the monetary operations of London, and Cornhill itself was at one time dotted with lottery offices, one of which was run by Carroll, who was knighted as Sheriff in 1837, and Lord Mayor in 1846. The house at the junction of Cornhill and Lombard Street, where Thomas Guy, the philanthropic bookseller had had his shop, was, a century later, Piddling's lottery office. The spot afterwards became known as 'Piddling's Lucky Corner' from the following incident which is related in Timb's *Romance of London*. A certain Spanish Don was one day walking near the Royal Exchange during the drawing of the lottery of 1815, and

feeling a strong desire to have a 'flutter,' referred to his pocket-book to ascertain the number of days which had elapsed since his providential escape from Madrid. He found that they amounted to 261, and thereupon went into Piddington's office and demanded the ticket of that number. A diligent search among the neighbouring lottery offices was necessary before this number could be found, but ultimately a half-ticket numbered 261 was procured, and at five o'clock the same evening that number was drawn a prize of £40,000, the only one of that magnitude ever offered in England. Eleven years later, in 1826, the last State Lottery in England was drawn.

The literary associations of Cornhill are many and notable. Freeman's Court, which stood at the eastern end of the Royal Exchange, was swept away 100 years ago, but from 1685 to 1695 Daniel De Foe—as his name was then spelt—carried on the business of a hosier and wool dealer at that address. He afterwards moved to Tilbury to engage in the making of bricks and tiles. It seems a little incongruous to connect either of these prosaic trades with the authorship of a story of romance and adventure which has thrilled the boyhood of a couple of centuries and more, but who would have expected the immortal *Pilgrim's Progress* to have come from the pen of a Bedford tinker, or that an unfortunate Spanish soldier would give us the equally imperishable *Don Quixote*?

Robinson Crusoe was not published until 1719, but an earlier literary venture of Defoe's was fated to meet with less happy results. This was a pamphlet entitled 'The Shortest Way with Dissenters,' which was described as 'a scandalous and seditious pamphlet,' and was, at any rate, a fine example of the author's biting irony. It was published anonymously, and gave such offence in certain quarters that, by a resolu-

tion of the House of Commons in January, 1703, it was ordered to be burnt by the common hangman in Palace Yard, Westminster. The House, at the same time, issued a reward of £50 for the author's arrest, but it was not until the following July that the offending journalist was captured. As part of his punishment he was condemned to be imprisoned during her Majesty's pleasure, and to be stood in the pillory on Cornhill, it being the idea in those days that punishments were more fittingly carried out in the locality where the offender was best known. If, in this case, it was expected that the misdemeanant would be subjected to the jeers and insults of his former neighbours, such hopes were disappointed, for John Forster, in his *Biographical Papers*, says that 'other missiles than were wont to greet a pillory reached De Foe, and shouts of a different temper, nothing more hardy than flowers being thrown at him.' Defoe himself recorded that 'the people were expected to treat me very ill, but it was not so; on the contrary they were pleased with me, and wished those who sent me were placed in my room, and expressed their affection by loud shouts and acclamations when I was taken down.'

Thomas Gray the poet, whose 'Elegy' is loved and quoted wherever the English language is spoken, was the son of a money scrivener, whose house, in 1716, stood on the south side of Cornhill, between Birch Lane and St. Michael's Church. The house was among those destroyed in the disastrous fire of 1748 before mentioned, and a tablet was, in recent years, placed by the late Sir Edward Cooper to mark the site.

Another famous figure of Restoration days was Samuel Pepys, the diarist and one-time Secretary of the Navy. Though not by birth connected with Cornhill, the Navy Office, to which he daily repaired, was situate in Seething

Lane not very far away, and Pepys must certainly have been well known to the habitués of the various taverns and coffee-houses of the neighbourhood on account of the frequency of his visits to these places of refreshment, many of which are by himself recorded.

Thomas Babington Macaulay, essayist, poet, historian and politician, was not born in London, but was taken as an infant to the house in Birch Lane which, in the year 1800, his parents occupied, and lived there for two years until they moved to Clapham. Laurence Hutton, in his *Literary Landmarks of London*, says that the future Lord Macaulay was daily carried along Cornhill and Threadneedle Street to take the air in Drapers Gardens, which then occupied a much wider and more open space than they do to-day.

Thomas Guy, though not strictly speaking a literary character himself, was interested in the literary productions of others in that he kept a bookseller's shop at the junction of Cornhill and Lombard Street. He is, of course, more famous as the founder of Guy's Hospital, on which worthy object he bestowed most of the great wealth he had accumulated. He had made a modest fortune out of the printing and selling of Bibles, which he further considerably increased by the purchase of seamen's tickets at a big discount. The funds thus acquired he invested in shares in the South Sea Company. In 1720, when seventy-five years of age, he is stated to have possessed £45,000 of the original South Sea Stock. When the boom began in that year the £100 shares quickly rose in value, and when they reached £300 Guy wisely decided to sell out. The rise was phenomenal, the price having, by June, reached £890, but Guy had disposed of the last of his holding at £600, thus realising a handsome fortune. He died four years later, having in the meantime built the hospital at a cost of nearly £19,000, bequeathing

£219,500 for its endowment—the largest sum ever left by an individual for charitable purposes.

Chatterton, 'the marvellous boy, the sleepless soul, that perished in his pride,' mentions in a letter to his sister a visit he paid to Tom's coffee-house, which stood in Cowper's Court, off Birch Lane, and Colley Cibber, the actor and dramatist, was a patron of the same establishment.

The *European Magazine* was first published by I. Sewell in Cornhill on January 1, 1782, and coming to more modern times, the names of the author of *Vanity Fair*, and the famous journalist who for so many years poured out a stream of articles on almost every conceivable subject for the columns of the *Daily Telegraph*, must not be forgotten when recalling the literary notabilities associated with this historic street. George Augustus Sala, in one of his books of reminiscences, has told us how, in the days when he had yet to make a name, Thackeray gave him a letter to Mr. George Smith, of the publishing firm of Smith, Elder, 'whose place of business was then on the Hill of Corn itself.' Sala was, at that time, contemplating the writing of a Life of Hogarth, and he found the great publisher very sympathetic towards the project, but before any definite arrangements were made the would-be biographer received a message from Thackeray which read 'About to start new Magazine. First-rate bill of fare. Want rich collops from you. W. M. T.'

Sala responded to this summons at once and Thackeray, he relates, 'explained to me fully the scope and purport of the new Monthly Magazine which he was to edit, and which was to be published by Messrs. Smith and Elder. He showed me the marvellously clever design for the cover of the Magazine, which was to be called the CORNHILL MAGAZINE.' This was in 1860, and when the magazine had been successfully launched a dinner was given by Mr. George

Smith at his house in Hyde Park Square to celebrate the event. At this first 'Cornhill' dinner, which afterwards became a monthly affair, a number of distinguished guests were present, including Richard Monckton Milnes (afterwards Lord Houghton), Frederick Leighton and J. E. Millais, both handsome young men who were already becoming celebrated as artists, Robert Browning, Sir Edwin Landseer, Anthony Trollope, and Sykes, the designer of the magazine's cover which had evoked the admiration of its first editor.

The 'Life' was never written by Sala, but he contributed several articles on Hogarth to the CORNHILL for which he received more generous payment than he had hitherto received from any publisher. 'A very munificent publisher' was the Victorian journalist's testimony to the head of the great firm which introduced Charlotte Brontë to the British reading public.

Take it for all in all, there are few, if any, of London's streets which can show so long, so varied, and so interesting a history as that of Cornhill.

SHINTO SHRINES AND FESTIVALS.

BY D. M. ROGER.

WHAT to-day is referred to as Nipponism is but a new flowering of the Shintoism rooted in myths over two thousand years old, first recorded in the 'Kōjiki' (Record of Ancient Things) in the eighth century. This document was not printed until nine centuries later and until that time had been only in the hands of Shinto priests to transmit as they thought fit to the people. The designation of Shintoism (Way of the Gods) was not actually given to this national creed until the eighteenth century, so that for several hundred years the peoples' perception of their gods came through dance, music and ritual performed in shrine precincts, even in Buddhist temples, for mixed Shinto, in which the Shinto Gods were identified with the Buddhist deities, was once tolerated and was not in fact considered a debased form until the Shinto Revival of two centuries ago which dissociated the two religions and helped finally to bring about the Restoration of the Mikado. As a reaction this time against Western influences, came Nipponism, or the Shinto Revival of 1932, which reached a culminating point this year when the Emperor's right hand, in the shape of the Army, freed itself from governmental restriction.

Every observer of Japan remarks the cohesive nature of the people: General Araki once said that the Chinese people were like sand and the Japanese like clay, that is they are emotionally bound as a people, largely through a continuous participation in Shinto observances, an important

part of which are festivals. The festivals of some of the Shinto shrines have been held annually in some form since the beginning of the Christian era, those of Izumo, and of the Ise shrine to the Sun Goddess being among the oldest and still drawing pilgrims from all over the country, as well as from other countries, to see the processions in ancient costume, to feel the magical or mystical communication with the ancestral spirits which are being propitiated. The organisation and preparations for festivals in the lesser pre-fectural and district shrines bring the people in the shrine vicinity together, and even if such festivities to-day are more perfunctory, because of many other spiritual outlets and entertainments, they are encouraged and made attractive enough to draw the people. One summer evening such a gathering was seen enjoying a Harold Lloyd movie in the open, the screen being fixed to one of the shrine buildings. On an average about three hundred festivals, small and large, are observed throughout the country every day.

Generally speaking, festivals in the rural districts are rich in beauty and those of the cities tend to tawdriness. The foreign onlooker who starts with archaeological enquiries usually ends with simple enjoyment of the subdued noise of musical instruments, of ox-carts, costumes and dance. Old people will wag their heads and say the festival isn't what it was in their day ; the young drummers and dancers trained to replace those who become too old for it have not the same skill. But the children squeal as loudly as ever when the warrior puppets in the side-show flick off each other's heads.

The first glimpse of festival is unforgettable. With the innocence of a new arrival I remarked that somewhere within a mile's radius continuous drumming had been going on for two days, coming loud on the breeze, then

fading, but it was explained as 'nothing' or just 'something at the shrine.' There is a damping indifference nowadays amongst the 'upper classes' in Japan to festivals : what simple and ignorant people do is not much their concern, and they are dismayed at the eager curiosity of a cool-blooded Westerner over what is barbaric and pagan.

The house where I was guest was discretion itself, with the windows on either side of the entrance thickly slatted. Deeply solemn stone lanterns set in the trimmed pines and azaleas bordered a drive which was so thick with small round pebbles that no visitor could come in haste or unheard. The solid wooden gates to the drive stood open so that anything passing down the road could be seen from the slatted front windows without it seeing you. Sounds of deep staccato shouting had been distinctly coming nearer when they turned suddenly to commotion, and a swarm of fifty stocky men and boys in light cotton garments trampled into the pebbled drive struggling with a weighty palanquin carried high. A proud gilded crane surmounted the gorgeous gold and lacquer casket borne on the shoulders of these youths with muscular bronze arms and legs straining in their united struggle. Cotton towels were twisted wreath-like round their black heads and with white teeth bared they hissed out their chant, 'Wasshoi, wasshoi,' in ecstasy. They set down the palanquin on trestles they had carried with them, wiped away their sweat, and when they came up to ask for contributions at the house it was clear they had already been well supplied with *saké*. There were the tradesmen, shop boys and apprentices of the neighbourhood giving vent to hoarse roisterous laughter and banter in a place where any other day they would tread with respect, and the mistress of the house and the servants were rushing about setting food and drink on trays as was expected of them.

When after some minutes the wide front door was slid open full trays were handed out to the leaders. Some of the crowd wore grease paint and powder, some patterned coats with their short trousers, or lengths of yellow cotton sashed round their waists ; easing their limbs, chattering, expectorating in the shrubbery, dancing, they made themselves at home.

The lady of the house bit her lip and treated them with stiff hospitality, seeing they were already gay enough. After bowing and shouting their thanks, again they hoisted the palanquin containing the divine Shinto emblem and, like a swarm of bees around it, staggered on their way.

My curiosity to know what was going on at the shrine was uncontrollable, but no member of the household would be seen going to a common festival—besides, in the crowds one might catch something—so I was put in charge of a young housemaid, and though she made a helpful guide, she evidently considered a person who wanted to go to festivals and who could not understand what was said in plain Japanese a complete illiterate. She trudged a little ahead, her wooden footwear making a hollow tuneful clink on the stones as we wound our way through narrow lanes between high bamboo fences and finally up many stone steps bordered by lanterns to the shrine on the hillside. On a permanent square stage to one side of the shrine yard two figures in comic masks were giving a slow dialogue of rustic wit with slapstick before a throng of upturned grinning faces, old and young. The shrine itself had lanterns hanging under sweeping eaves which indicated it had once been a Buddhist temple. Above the dim, lantern-lit square black pine-tops silhouetted on the night sky : here and there groups of young men strolled with their hands tucked into their black kimono sashes, small boys and girls swung on

their mothers' hands, maidservants in light kimonos, their black hair sleeked beside their broad red cheeks, stood mildly gaping. A few lighted stalls were selling sweets and toys.

Seated at the back of the stage a drummer worked incessantly and the dancers on the stage had changed : a figure of terrifying appearance in a glaring mask with long bushy white hair appeared silently as though from nowhere to do a stately dance. My guide explained it was Okagura.

The Okagura dances date back to before the sixth century, to pre-Buddhist days and the Sun Goddess myth ; more authentic performances of them are now given by a society concerned with their preservation and revival.

It is after all the festivals of the immediate neighbourhood that make a more lasting impression than the showy ones tourists are advised to see, like the Aoi and the Gion in Kyoto and the Nikkō festivals, because willy-nilly you become a part of them, with the drumming which steals your sleep and the neighbour's children togging themselves, your grocer breaking into a dance before his shop, instead of merely a spectator.

I was last aware of a festival when a good citizen of the district came to the door wanting to take a yen from us in exchange for a rotund white and red lantern and some artificial flowers to be hung over the front door during the week of festival at the Shinto shrine around the corner. In the old days it was a much better festival, he explained, and now they were trying to revive it. Every house was going to hang out a lantern, so we had no real alternative. A day or two later another citizen came to put up a string between the tapering trees in front of the house, hung with strips of cut white paper at intervals to keep away evil spirits.

The shrine just around the corner was dedicated to a

famous Japanese leader and warrior of the sixteenth century, Nobunaga, and had had earlier associations with the Buddhist god of war, Hachiman, hence the flocks of pigeons, which are regarded as the messengers of Hachiman, circling and strutting about the building always. Beneath the scaly copper trunks of several grown pine trees were dwarfed ones, stone lanterns, and maples set about the yard, and lesser shrines, one to Inari, the god (or goddess) of Fertility, guarded by two stone fox messengers, and a rather smaller than life-size seated stone image, thought to be the Buddhist Yakushi, the Healer, whose association with Hachiman is obvious. It was a bit puzzling at first to find that, besides having a wooden roof above him, a trough of water and dippers at one side of him, this god had clusters of round bristling pan brushes hanging all over the pillars supporting his roof. One day an old man shuffling about there threw some light on the matter : he had bad pains in his forearm, so he took a dipperful of the water, poured it over the god's head, another he poured over the god's left forearm, then he produced a little brush and rubbed the wet forearm with it, muttering some prayer in the hope that his pain would be cured. This particular Buddha was evidently considered efficacious, because one day when our cook was passing the shrine on her way to see the doctor, with her poisoned finger in a large white bandage, an old woman stopped her to advise her visiting the stone Buddha, who, she said, was a better cure for bad fingers than the hospital.

There were always things going on in the shrine yard, children playing, old men sitting sunning their skinny legs, women suckling infants, young soldiers clapping their hands and bowing before the shrine, priests burning incense within, but the annual festival was more than all this.

Like an archway across the end of our road, a platform

made of spruce-poles was erected and four drums with sometimes two or three flutes were played by relays of citizens, very zealously for the first two days of the festival to put you into a properly elated mood. A near-by empty shop was turned into a kind of temporary shrine, and here they placed the image of Nobunaga in full warrior dress, with a drooping long moustache and fierce grimace. He was brought from his permanent home in the shrine for the festivities and received offerings of rice cakes, pink and white, *saké*, fruit, vegetables, dried fish, supplied through the local shops, which came in handy to refresh the citizens who kept long vigils there in their best black kimonos. The children came and gaped and those on their mothers' backs gurgled at Nobunaga.

Lastly, people appeared from goodness knows where and set up side-shows and rows of stalls in the shrine yard and along the narrow streets near by, very brightly lit by electricity at night and selling everything—buttons, electric torches, spun sugar, celluloid dolls, goldfish, rayon socks, bottled snakes, hot stew, flags, blouses, hot bean cakes, live rabbits and the rest, like any country fair, with human freaks in tents, puppet shows, wild animals, performing cats in kimonos, conjurers, propagandists and medicine men.

By the next morning Nobunaga had been returned to his shrine and every trace of the three-day festival had disappeared. There is often more joy over the first signs of festival than over the last, and in heavy rain we took down the lantern, now useless for next year since its red monogram had run into a pink blotch. But in spite of changing conceptions of Shinto ethics, the colour of the people's festivals holds fairly fast.

EGYPTIAN ENVOI.

*Far round us broods the desert's timeless sand.
 Our little houses, girdled with bright trees
 Issue a challenge to this ruthless land,
 Home of implacable antiquities.*

*Other and nobler buildings once were here,
 Graceful and mighty pylons, towers and domes,
 Set up in pride of victory, or fear
 Of some hard god who ruled men's lives and homes.*

*Greeks, Persians, Romans, all have passed this way,
 Holding brief majesty by conquering might.
 For each the pride of Empire had its day,
 All conquering day, engulfed by endless night.*

*The desert gods still guard their ancient land,
 Six thousand years have passed since first they saw
 The sun incarnadine the tawny sand,
 And heard Osiris' trumpets call to war.*

*All others came and went—and so must we.
 Our sojourn too shall finish at the last,
 And yielding up our fleeting regency,
 Will leave the old gods to their ancient past.*

Ismailia.

HESTER PILE.

ONE, TWO, GOD'S NOT TRUE.

BY ROBERT BUCKNER.

THE teacher, Tanya Soloviev, a handsome woman of thirty with dark hair and eyes and a quiet, dignified manner, stood by an open window and watched the children working in the garden.

The wide yard surrounding the red-brick schoolhouse was covered with white sand, but beyond the low wall was an open field, already green with the tender shoots of growing corn. The round shaved heads of the young boys shone like melons in the warm sunlight as they worked, bending to spade the earth or standing erect while they compared the height of the stalks.

The field was not planted solidly, but in a checkerboard fashion, with patches of barren black ground between the budding squares. Looking at the field, Tanya Soloviev reflected without pride how well she had followed the instructions of the Commissar of Education in far-away Moscow, and how well the children in turn had obeyed her orders.

Only a month ago she had given each of the boys two plots of ground. One they called the child's plot and the other was God's plot. Both had been planted with the same kind of seed, and each day the child's plot was carefully cultivated, weeded and watered. But nothing was done to God's plot.

When summer came the child's garden would produce vegetables and flowers, while God's plot would yield only weeds and briars. 'Then the children will see for them-

selves how foolish a thing is Christian faith,' the Commissar had written confidently.

Suddenly the bell began to ring. The children stood up slowly from the wet ground and glanced rebelliously at the schoolhouse. Then at a word from one of them, a slim, lithe boy whose sensitive clear-cut features were conspicuous among the group and which marked him as its leader, the boys raised the spades to their shoulders.

Without haste they formed a column two abreast and strolled leisurely through the gate into the yard, singing in the high-pitched voices of ten-year-olds the marching song of Soviet youth :

'One, two, God's not true,
Three, four, pray no more,
Five, six . . .'

The teacher turned away from the window and walked back to her chair. In a few minutes the boys came in from the washroom, wiping their hands on their blouses, and sat down at the desks. The particles of dirt which still clung to their shoes and bare knees brought the rich, fresh scent of new-turned earth into the warm room. The school-room was like all others. Pinned to the walls were several crude maps and coloured pictures of fruit drawn by the children. Over the teacher's desk was draped a large flag of the Soviet Republics, while at the back of the room on a pedestal stood the white plaster head of Ivan Illitch Lenin as a child.

Though it was already the middle of April there was a chill in the air, for spring comes late to Balakovo. Tanya Soloviev directed the serious-looking boy, Alexei Vartan, to put more coal into the stove ; and she waited, looking over the students' heads, while Alexei shook the grate.

When the room was quiet the teacher looked down again

at the notice which she had received that morning. There were very few days that passed without some letter of warning or advice from the Commissar. At the top of each bulletin appeared the grim reminder that for any teacher who failed to execute her orders there would follow immediate dismissal from duty and expulsion from the Party.

Tanya Soloviev brushed her hair with the back of her hand and spoke quietly : 'Pioneers, before we go any further with to-day's work I regret to inform you that the League says we have fallen behind in our collection of the holy images. The Stavropol school is now twenty full points ahead of us, and there are only three days left.'

The children looked around at each other in surprise. This was a serious business. Their class's position in the holy image contest conducted by *The League of Fighting Atheists* was the envy of all Samara, and, if they lost, it would bring disgrace to every student in Balakovo.

At the rear of the room the leader, Alexei Vartan, after hesitating thoughtfully for a second, stood up and addressed the teacher in a loud clear voice : 'My father keeps a picture hidden on the top shelf of our wardrobe, Tanya Soloviev. But I am not sure it is a holy picture.'

'So ? Then why should he hide it ?' She asked the required question listlessly. 'Remember, Alexei, you have signed the solemn pledge to bring in every ikon, picture of our Lord and the saints, and all crucifixes found in your home. Tell me, what is this picture of your father's like ?'

The boy looked doubtfully at his desk before replying. 'I think it is a saint. Anyway, it is set in the centre of a big gold cross.'

'Then I am sure it is a saint's picture, Alexei,' the teacher nodded firmly. She looked at him and waited.

At this news the children stirred and began to whisper

excitedly among themselves. A saint's picture in a gold cross should be worth fifty points, perhaps even more. Their eyes turned admiringly to their leader.

'I will bring it to-morrow,' Alexei Vartan replied quietly, and sat down.

The single room which Alexei shared with his father, a bookkeeper in Metal Plant No. 15, was in a vast block of cement barracks near the Volga piers. The simple furnishings consisted of a white iron bed, a gas stove, a shelf filled with books, two straight wooden chairs and the rickety desk where they ate and read by the single light. The only colour in the square grey room was a poster of the Crimea tacked on the wall, and a pair of faded blue curtains at the window, unevenly cut and sewn by the father's blunt fingers.

Stepan Vartan was forty-two, a tall and silent widower with greying hair and dark deep-set eyes, whose lean mobile face was veiled by the impenetrable mask of his generation.

It was a mask which puzzled his son, for it had none of that joy and hopeful enthusiasm which Alexei had learned was the sign of a cheerful worker. But Alexei's doubts were natural, for it was a face that haunted Moscow too, this mask of Stepan Vartan's. They knew well enough in the Kremlin what it concealed. It was the badge worn by a million men Stepan Vartan's age and older; men who had been born and raised under the Old Régime, who had survived impassively the convulsions of civil war and starvation, men who said nothing but sat waiting, waiting and watching . . .

No, it was quite impossible for anyone in Russia, especially their own families, to know what the million Stepan Vartans thought. True enough, they went through the lip-service necessary to join the Party and get their jobs.

But their children regarded them as suspiciously as did Moscow, with open contempt as misfits, curiosities, queer fish who were better dead and out of the way of progress.

The night after Alexei stole the holy image from the wardrobe shelf and gave it to Tanya Soloviev for the school's anti-religious chest, his father washed the supper dishes hurriedly and changed from his working clothes to the suit he wore only on Rest Days—and on those nights when he went alone to the Cathedral. For though the fine churches of Balakovo were now all silent and crumbling with neglect—their altars and windows covered by immense cartoons of Christ and the saints in unspeakable positions—the great Kazan Cathedral was kept open as a museum for the amusement of the people now freed from all such superstition and ignorance.

Alexei pretended to study while he watched his father's movements from the corner of his eye. He held his breath when at last Stepan finished dressing and reached up to the top shelf for the image which always accompanied him on his secret visits to the church.

Stepan felt carefully in all the corners of the shelf. Then he swept a pile of papers to the floor in his frantic, futile search. After a moment he turned and walked slowly across the room to the desk, where his son's head was bent low over a book.

'Alexei, have you seen the cross in the cupboard ?' he asked.

The boy looked up at his father, his face red with guilt, and he stammered : 'Yes, I g-gave it to the teacher, Tanya Soloviev.'

Stepan turned suddenly pale and sank into the chair. 'But why, son ? Why did you give it to her ?' he whispered incomprehensively.

Alexei, recovering most of his courage and defiance, clapped the book shut and leaned across the desk, his blue eyes flashing. ‘Why? Because every one of us has pledged his word to help wipe the very idea of God out of Russia. *That's why I took it!*’

‘*Wipe—the—very—idea—of—God—*’ Stepan echoed, staring at his son.

‘Don't speak that word!’ Alexei reminded him severely. And then, confused by the expression on his father's face, the boy suddenly burst forth with all his pent-up emotion . . .

‘I tell you God is not, not, *not!* And religion is the o-pi-ate of the people!’ he exclaimed hotly, standing up and clenching his fists.

‘Be quiet, Alexei,’ Stepan commanded. ‘You forget that you are speaking to your father.’

‘My father!’ the boy scoffed. ‘You have made me ashamed to call you my father, sneaking out to the Cathedral at night when you think there is nobody looking. But *I* saw you. I followed you there! . . . And the other boys have found out that you never go to work on Holy Saturday or Easter. When they ask me why, I pretend not to know, or else deny it. Well, I shan't any longer! ’

‘But, Alexei, there are many of us who do not work on those days,’ Stepan explained gently.

‘What of it? Then you are all fools, traitors, *all of you!*’ his son cried, great tears welling in his eyes. For in an infinite though piteously hidden measure to which he would never have admitted, Alexei loved his father. He loved him with all a ten-year-old boy's adoration for a brave Don Cossack who had once worn the Order of St. George on his tunic; and he loved him with all the

fixed devotion of an only child who has never known another parent. But whenever, as now, these emotions arose, they made Alexei deeply ashamed of his sentimental weakness. He turned away and blinked back his tears.

Stepan closed his eyes as if his son had struck him across the face. He arose unsteadily and looked down at Alexei's shaven head, as round and pink as it had been years ago when he was a baby. Suddenly Stepan reached out a hand and drew the boy to his side.

'Oh Alexei, why did you do it?' he whispered hoarsely. 'That was all I had left of—'

'B-but I *had* to do it!' Alexei's face turned up as he tried to explain. 'We signed the pledge to confiscate all the ikons and saints' pictures we could find. Don't you see, Father, I gave my *word*.'

'I see, son. Only it wasn't exactly a saint's picture, Alexei.' Stepan ran his short blunt fingers affectionately over his son's head.

'Why—it *was* a saint's picture, wasn't it, Father?' the child asked excitedly.

Stepan pulled his cap from a pocket and walked towards the door. He turned and replied without facing the boy directly: 'Yes, in a way it was, Alexei . . . you see, that was your mother's picture.' He went out and shut the door softly behind him.

Little Alexei stared at the door for a full minute after his father had gone before the words fully penetrated his bewildered child's brain. Then he ran blindly across the room, sobbing bitterly, and threw himself upon the bed.

Below in the street Stepan buttoned the grey, many-patched cavalry coat as he walked towards the distant town, leaning his weight into the cold night wind which swept

off the spring-flooded Volga. And as he walked he thought of what had just happened in the room.

No, Alexei was not to blame. He was a good boy at heart. Only they were trying desperately to rip that heart out of him and put in its place another of their own making, a thing of steel and ice.

The vision angered Stepan for a moment, until he recalled with a wry smile how Alexei looked in the mornings, asleep at his side—his smooth forehead unwrinkled by knotty riddles, his lips puckered so innocently that it was impossible to believe them ever capable of any mockeries of God. And yet he had said . . .

At the left of the Grain Place in the centre of the town Stepan halted in the shadows of the Cathedral and glanced cautiously about the deserted square. The houses and the street-lamps were now dark. There was no light in Balakovo except that of a cold waning moon, and no sound but the far-off whistle of a river boat. Stepan turned up his collar, ran quickly up the steps and slipped through a small side door into the church.

The moonlight through the shattered windows cast a silvery shaft upon the old worn stones, while in the gloom between the tall columns the grotesque faces of the mock-saints leered down at him from their posters.

Upon entering, Stepan was not surprised to observe the light of a single candle glimmering in the still Cathedral. The woman whose head was hooded by her kerchief was almost always here at this hour, kneeling before the Kazan Madonna, now partly covered by a canvas with a hideous parody of The Last Supper.

Before the altar of his name-saint Stepan knelt and prayed; a short prayer, for there was nothing whatever that he wanted for himself. And as for Alexei . . . now Stepan

knew that his son must continue alone on his strange road, to whatever happiness might be in store for him. For his own good, Alexei must be like the others. He must think and act and—yes, believe as everyone else did. It was too lonely and dangerous otherwise.

He arose stiffly from the stone floor and turned to leave, when the woman with the kerchief passed, her footsteps padding softly in the peaceful silence. Directly opposite him she looked up and smiled in recognition ; and Stepan, who had always supposed her to be one of the Old Believers, some simple aged peasant, was amazed to find the face of a young woman whose dark and burning eyes met his in complete understanding.

Stepan drew a quick breath and stared after her. What ? he thought—was it possible then that there were *young* people too who still believed, who could not forget—who, in spite of all their new culture, could not forget the old faith of their childhood ? Stepan crossed himself slowly and reverently, as one who has beheld a sign. He waited until the woman was safely on her way, then he also returned quietly through the narrow doorway into the night.

Alexei was asleep when his father reached home. The Young Pioneer, his unhappy face furrowed with the tracks of tears, lay fully dressed upon the bed. Stepan smiled as he slipped off his son's clothes and eased him into the covers, gently, without waking him.

He sat for a long while on the edge of the bed and looked tenderly at the sleeping child, as one studies for a last time the beloved dead. And honestly, Stepan asked himself, what need had Alexei in his new and throbbing world for an old bewildered ghost who had not the grace to die ? His decision made in the church, never again to interfere or

question the wisdom of his son's fixed career, already seemed to have widened the great abyss between them.

Stepan recalled a banner which Alexei's class had carried in the last May Day parade—*Willing clay for the State to mould into The New Man*. And what sort of man would they have made of Alexei when they finished? he wondered. All those titles he would wear—Komsomol, Rabfak, Red Star Worker—what did they stand for? What did they mean on the banner by *The New Man*? It was all a queer, muddled business, and entirely beyond him; Stepan shook his head as he undressed. Why, anyone with a kopeck's worth of imagination could tell them that beneath all their fine names and obscure pledges the children would remain simple Russians. Ideas fool the brain, not the soul.

For there had been times, he remembered with certainty, in the summer on his Rest Days, when they went swimming together in the river or took their lunch into the chalk hills beyond Tersa, where he told Alexei of the wars and of his boyhood long ago beside the Don, when Stepan Vartan knew that he had been close to his son. Then they had understood each other.

But now they had stolen even that away from him; coldly, systematically, as a part of the Plan. Oh, they were clever, so damnably clever, those teachers!

He lay awake thinking of the devils who were filling Alexei's head with their ideas, and found it altogether impossible to picture them.

In Stepan's childhood only men had taught school. Great bearded giants they were too, in long black coats always streaked with snuff. They roared terrifyingly, but no one was really afraid of them. He recalled one teacher, old Dmitri Vitachek, who used to read fairy tales to them. He could imitate the sounds of the birds and the animals

and the voices of the princess and the ogre, until the whole class would be weak with excitement and laughter. Once Stepan had asked Alexei if they still read the old tales and had received the scornful reply, 'No, of course not !' Tanya Soloviev says they are all sentimental rot which hamper our minds and the advancement of the Cause. She says we must have stories that are *real*, not fantastic bedtime tales !'

The teachers again. They had an answer for everything. But how did they answer to themselves, he wondered, those older ones who *knew* they were lying :

It had always been Stepan Vartan's simple nature to confront his enemies openly, and though he realised its futility, his sudden desire to meet Alexei's teacher became almost an obsession. He thought about it all the next day at his desk in the whirring chaos of Metal Plant No. 15.

There was no difficulty about it, he found. Parents were encouraged to visit the school. But what would he say ? The teacher would naturally take him to be a good Communist father interested in his son's work. And he couldn't understand his son's work. He had tried, but the books made no sense. Perhaps if he just saw her and talked with her she might explain some of the things which puzzled him, and then Alexei would no longer be ashamed of his father's ignorance and think him a fool.

The following was Stepan's Day of Rest. He said nothing of his intentions to Alexei at breakfast, but early in the afternoon when he knew the boys would be working in the garden he arrived at the schoolhouse, wearing his best suit with a white shirt and his hands scrubbed clean.

He approached the building slowly, with suspicion. At the gate he hesitated for a while, wondering if he should

turn back ; but was led into the yard by a sudden strong urge which surprised him.

One of the younger teachers, a short thick-set woman with glasses, leaned in the doorway smoking a cigarette and watching Stepan closely.

' Well, Comrade, who is it you want to see ? ' she called out in a loud and friendly voice.

Stepan blushed and removed his hat. ' Is—is the teacher named Tanya Soloviev here ? My son——' He paused and nodded towards the children in the garden.

The young woman turned in the doorway and pointed behind her with the cigarette. ' Second door on your right,' she directed him casually.

Stepan walked up the steps and into the dark hall. He knocked softly at the door, and after a moment a woman's tired voice told him to enter.

The teacher was standing with her back to the light at the far side of the room. Stepan remained in the doorway fumbling with his cap as he looked around at the drawings and the statue of the Lenin-child.

' Yes, Comrade ? ' the woman asked politely, moving towards him.

Stepan's gaze came back to her and he bowed quickly. ' I am Stepan Vartan—Alexei Vartan's father,' he explained.

' Oh yes. I am glad you have come. Parents are always welcome,' the teacher replied automatically, and held out her hand. ' I am Tanya Soloviev.'

Stepan's eyes met hers absently, then widened with surprise. For a hushed and breathless moment they stared at each other in sudden shocked discovery.

' But—you are the woman I——'

Tanya Soloviev flung her hand across Stepan's mouth and glanced wildly at the open door.

'Be quiet!' she whispered, white with terror. She drew Stepan by the hand to the rear of the room, where she turned to face him.

'Yes, I am the woman you saw in the Cathedral,' she confessed, her dark eyes fixed upon his defiantly. 'And now of course you are honour-bound to report me.'

Stepan looked straight into her eyes and at the firm full lips now tremulous with fear. He shook his head and held tightly to her hand, as if he were afraid of losing it.

'But why should I tell anyone?' he asked.

'Then why have you come here?' the teacher pleaded, '--for the cross which Alexei stole? I haven't it. They have taken it away.'

'No, not for the cross,' Stepan replied honestly. 'I came here to see for myself the people who teach Alexei to steal and to say . . . to say there is no God.'

The woman dropped her eyes. 'How you must hate me,' she said.

'No, Tanya Soloviev, I do not hate you,' Stepan answered her slowly. 'I have long ago finished with hating anything.'

Suddenly, fearing that he might go away before she could explain, the teacher caught the lapels of Stepan's coat with both hands and exclaimed fervently: 'Don't you see, they sent me here because they suspected I was a Believer! My father and my brothers were trained in the Church. It is an old trap they set for teachers. But now . . . now it is work or die, and I know nothing but this—' She spread her hands towards the desks.

'They *knew*, and still they kept you here?' Stepan whispered.

'Yes, yes!' she nodded feverishly. 'This is their sentence that I have to serve. They never told me that I would some day have to teach people to despise God . . . Oh,

do you think it is easy for me to drill their blasphemies into these children? . . . But now if I ran away or asked for other work I would be playing directly into their hands. Besides, I have nowhere to go . . . Now do you understand, Stepan Vartan, why I must stay?' She dropped her hands limply and closed her eyes.

'Yes, now I understand,' Stepan replied quietly, looking down at her bowed head with an old forgotten emotion that stirred him deeply and powerfully.

'Anyway, what does it matter?' the teacher said as if to herself. 'They have their faith and we have ours. Nothing can ever change that.'

'Yes, they have—' he nodded at the Lenin-child, 'and we have God.'

'Do you think He understands about this, and can forgive me? Do you?' she asked eagerly.

'I think—I think He must have led me here.' Stepan caught both her hands in his.

Tanya looked up at him and smiled through shining eyes. 'From the first night I saw you kneeling there alone I asked the Madonna if—perhaps some time—'

Above them in the building the bell began to ring.

In the garden the boys stood up from the wet ground and raised the spades to their shoulders. Then at a command from Alexei they formed their column and marched slowly through the gate into the yard, singing in the high sweet voices of children:

'One, two, God's not true,
Three, four, pray no more,
Five, six . . .'

New York.

BY THE WAY.

FOR what seems now quite a long period, though in reality it is of no great duration, we have had in this country a very welcome respite from those internecine industrial disputes and stoppages which grievously marked the decade after the War : we have climbed accordingly—in spite of the obstinate existence of what we euphemistically call ‘the special areas’—from the depth of the depression in which we wallowed in 1931. And we have been able to praise ourselves as happily different from other internally jarring nations. There are signs, however, now that this enviable state of things may be changing : at the time of writing they can perhaps be called slight, but they are nonetheless distinctly ominous—here and there at least in various industries and forms there is a renewal of that uneasy under-current with the workings of which we grew unhappily familiar. It is a sad comment upon human nature that when industry is in the doldrums there is less obvious unrest than when it prospers : in the former case presumably men are loth to risk the little they have and make bad worse, in the latter belief grows easily that others are being unduly rewarded. Let us hope that in this febrile world, in which British sanity and common sense have parts to play of even more supreme importance than ever before, these qualities will be exercised as powerfully in the national as in the international field.

* * *

And in that latter field, more and more clearly visible, continue to widen the two muddy swamps that go by many differing names, according to the company kept, but are in general distinguished as Fascism and Bolshevism. One of the puzzles of understanding the extreme animosity

of the one to the other is that to the uninitiated—or at any rate to the unprejudiced—they both often seem to stand for the same things, namely, the domination of the autocrat and the suppression of the liberties of the individual. ‘Democracy is done for !’ cries Mussolini. Stalin has said that for years. In a reasonable world the two would, one would think, hail each other as brothers, as brothers-in-arms if need be : instead of that, they glare at one another across the bayonets and bomb-factories of Europe. Beyond discussion, it is at present in no sense a reasonable world ; and even the slogan of every injured intervener, ‘A plague on both your houses,’ does not help matters much. Nothing does except a strong and steady faith, coupled—for Britons at least—with a profound belief in the virtues of liberty.

★ ★ ★

Molly is missing from her corner : for years she has sat there, the last-left of any crossing-sweeper of whom I have any knowledge, possibly the last of any in the world. In her younger days she was an institution, busy and bustling and with a humorous tongue ; in later times, crippled and confined to a chair, she has watched with bright eyes and indomitable interest the changing, noisy world. The houses about her pitch are all William and Mary or at the latest Anne : is it too fanciful to think of Molly as of the same remote period ? She would have looked well at the door of a sedan-chair. Passing her not long ago when out with my young children, I told them that when I was a boy (which is after all not a hundred years ago) there were crossing-sweepers at most of the principal corners of London streets. ‘But what for ?’ they asked in puzzled unison. ‘To sweep back the mud, of course,’ I answered. ‘It was often a foot high at least at the sides.’ They would not believe me till I insisted : then they supposed me more

definitely from the Ark than they had previously decided. And yet few recollections are more vivid to me of walks in childhood and even well on into boyhood than those great, greasy masses by the roadside into which pebbles and other small objects could be dropped to be sucked slowly and excitingly into the depths. So completely and so rapidly do conditions of daily life now change that even to me as I walked on with the children it seemed almost impossible to believe that these recollections were actually my own and not just curious facts read in a history book.

★ ★ ★

How strangely and how strongly blood sometimes works, through all the mists of time and circumstance ! Recently I had to re-visit Scotland after an interval of many, many months to give an address on the future, and the first glimpse of that wonderful country seen from the train in the gloaming of a winter's day stirred me, thinking as I was of my impending address, in so sudden a blend of mystery and pride that I wrote these lines as its conclusion :—

*The quiet hills of Scotland,
How strengthfully they stand !
They breathe to me uplifted
A soul-possessing land.*

*Beyond the brag and bluster
That fever half mankind
They rise in sober bounty
A bulwark God designed.*

*The spirit of this people
Above the tempest rides,
A light undimmed, undaunted—
Whatever fate betides.*

No doubt with the laudable object of encouraging me in my labours, a friend told me the other day that he had been talking to the Editor of a popular magazine and had asked him what kind of people read the pages of his production. 'God knows,' replied the Editor : 'I hope I've never met any.' I am afraid I have not yet acquired that contempt for my audience which has been called the chief prerogative of the bore. Is it, I wonder, the secret also of that elusive quality, popularity ?

* * *

Books seem to have come to me for this month's commentary in pairs. There are, first of all, two which have for their subject the inexhaustible interest of England, and they differ from one another nearly as much as one English county differs from another. In *England's Character* (Hutchinson, 7s. 6d.) S. B. P. Mais takes the reader on a personal tour of wandering inspection and interest ; it is all pleasantly discursive and as agreeable as a book that has no special originality or distinction can be. W. J. Blyton's *English Cavalcade* (Murray, 7s. 6d. n.) is of other calibre : this author is known to readers of CORNHILL as possessing to a quite abnormal degree a blend of knowledge both of English literature and of English country life ; he has been, and remains, a man of letters and culture, he is also now daily in practical communion with the life of the fields, and in this book he gives us of his best from both springs. This is England, shire by shire as she has been seen, loved, and described by all the great users of her tongue ; it is a book which lovers of English letters and English country will long wish to keep by their bedsides.

* * *

On Constable's list of new publications are two books

which can be bracketed only by reason of their publisher : they are evidence at least of his catholicity of choice. One consists of a bundle of recently discovered letters all written to *Dear Miss Heber* (8s. 6d. n.) at the end of the eighteenth century. As a publication they suffer to some extent in interest by reason of the fact that they are all to this vague and unknown young lady and none of her answers have been preserved ; moreover, they are in my judgment over-presented. The introduction by Francis Bamford is necessary to their understanding, but the two prefaces severally added by Georgia and Sacheverell Sitwell are largely redundant, and the notes, whilst of value to the student, are so enumerated and set apart as to be annoying to the general reader. These letters have neither the variety nor the interest of such a collection as that presented by Arthur Bryant in his *Postman's Horn*, but, nevertheless, they have the quiet attraction of their period and what could be better than this from the sedate and conscientious Miss Iremonger, written in August, 1789, 'Is there in Nature ought so fair as the mild Majesty of private life ?' The second book is also a collection, in this case of short studies brought together by the American writer, Paul Horgan, under the title *Lingering Walls* (7s. 6d. n.). Every one of these is well written and dramatic, if a trifle macabre ; their defect as a collection is that when once the reader has grasped the generic significance of the title the end of each is known as soon as it is begun—which necessarily detracts from the essential drama. But the stories are unquestionably good.



And two novels, both from Harrap (7s. 6d. n.) and both—as is usual nowadays—written by women, in the case of

Plaque with Laurel, written by the two who, after the manner of 'Michael Field,' write under the joint name of 'M. Barnard Eldershaw': these are Australians, and it is of Australia they write, adopting on this occasion the now overused device for novel-making of getting together a lot of people for a few days in one place and noting down their actions and reactions. The previous two novels of 'M. Barnard Eldershaw' have been highly praised and by critics as noteworthy as Arnold Bennett, and *Plaque with Laurel* comes out with what is now generally known as a 'recommendation': it is an account of an Australian Writers Conference held at Canberra to unveil a plaque to an illustrious dead author, Richard Crale, but to me it remains a bit of a puzzle; it is clever enough, but so removed from reality. Authors, I know, are popularly supposed to talk continually, conceitedly, and maliciously about books, their own and their rivals, but in fact they hardly ever do—and I find it quite impossible to believe that Australian authors are all such gas-bags and nit-wits as they are here presented. The other novel, *The Old Ashburn Place*, by Margaret Flint, is announced as the winner of the \$10,000 prize in the Fourth Dodd Read Novel Contest and it certainly deserves attention: it is New England, life in and around a family on a homestead; it is not exactly a pleasant story, but it is undeniably very well told, a tale of two brothers and their unwilling rivalry and unbroken love for each other. Charlie, Morris, and the purposeful Elsie all live; but it is idle, kindly, old 'Pop' who is really the making of the book. Quite a novel to read, with its terseness, its drama, and its skilful portrayal of the minds of the inarticulate.

G.

THE 'CORNHILL' COMPETITION.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 161.

PRIZES of books to the value of £1, from John Murray's catalogue, are offered to the two solvers whose letters are first opened. Answer, containing the coupon from page iv, must be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, 50 Albemarle Street, W.1, and must reach the Editor by 31st March.

' Yet we are the movers and shakers
Of the —— for ever, it —— '

1. ' She —— —the lady of my delight—
A shepherdess of sheep.'
2. ' Or emptied some dull —— to the drains
One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk : '
3. ' Why, why ——, my pensive friend,
At pleasures slipp'd away ? '
4. ' She left the web, she left the ——,
She took three paces thro' the room,'
5. ' If there were —— to sell,
What would you buy ? '

Answer to Acrostic 159, January number: ' Ocean Green ' (James Clarence Mangan: ' Dark Rosaleen '). 1. OwinG (Hood: ' The Bridge of Sighs '). 2. CideR (Keats: ' To Autumn '). 3. EveE (Keats: ' Song of the Indian Maiden '). 4. AbovE (John Clare: ' Written in Northampton County Asylum '). 5. NooN (Shelley: ' From the Arabic ').

The first correct answers opened were sent by ' Lorain,' Bournemouth, and Mrs. G. E. Owen, Green Hall, Carmarthen, who are invited to choose books, as mentioned above. N.B.—Sources need not be given.

ue, are
nswers,
crostic
y 31st

(James
The
Eve
Clare
Shelley

mouth,
ited to
iven.

don